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Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grants

Round 1 Grantee Interim Report Synthesis

SUBMITTED TO

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Disclaimer

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About Trewon Technologies

Trewon Technologies is an 8(a), HUBZone, and Economically Disadvantaged Woman-Owned Small Business (EDWOSB) providing enterprise-wide solutions to federal and commercial clients. Trewon brings over five decades of experience conducting research and evaluating programs, processes, and policies across federal agencies, including foundational evaluation practices in compliance with the Evidence Act. Trewon staff members use best practices in research and evaluation that align with its core values: collaboration, client-centeredness, resolution, diversity, and passion.

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Glossary

TERM	DEFINITION
Accelerated learning strategies	Education and training approaches that allow participants to progress through coursework and gain credits and credentials more quickly than they would in traditional, time-based college courses (Scott et al., 2020).
Apprenticeship	An industry-driven, high-quality career pathway where employers can develop and prepare their future workforce, and individuals can obtain paid work experience, classroom instruction, mentorship, and a portable credential (ApprenticeshipUSA, n.d.).
Articulation agreements	A formal partnership between colleges designed to create a seamless transfer from community college to 4-year institutions (Barrington, 2023).
Baseline	The existing status of the intended outcome and can be either a quantitative or a qualitative description of the current state.
Buy-in	“Acceptance of and willingness to actively support and participate in something (such as a proposed new plan or policy)” (Merriam Webster, 2023).
Capacity building	That which is necessary to improve an organization’s operational, programmatic, or financial maturity so it may more effectively and efficiently advance its mission (Chandler & Kennedy, 2015).

TERM	DEFINITION
Career pathways	The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 defines a career pathway as “a combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services that: (A) aligns with the skill needs of industries in the economy of the State or regional economy involved; (B) prepares an individual to be successful in any of a full range of secondary or postsecondary education options, including registered apprenticeships; (C) includes counseling to support an individual in achieving the individual’s education and career goals; (D) includes, as appropriate, education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster; (E) organizes education, training, and other services to meet the particular needs of an individual in a manner that accelerates the educational and career advancement of the individual to the extent practicable; (F) enables an individual to attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent and at least one recognized postsecondary credential; and (G) helps an individual enter or advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster.” (U.S. DOL Employment and Training Administration [ETA], n.d., Section 3[7]).

TERM	DEFINITION
College bridge programs	Programs designed to help high school students transition to college; they include summer bridge programs to prepare students for their first year of 4-year college and 2-year community college programs designed to pave the way to a 4-year school (Grace-Odeleye & Santiago, 2019).
Consortium	A collaborative arrangement where multiple colleges or universities come together to pool their resources, expertise, and efforts (Malveaux, 2019).
Constant comparative analysis	An iterative qualitative research approach originating in grounded theory involving researchers collecting data, analyzing them, and then using what they learn to inform further data collection (Stewart, n.d.).
Correlational	A subtype of inferential statistics used to determine prevalence and relationships among variables and to forecast events from current data (Curtis et al., 2016).
Deductive coding	A top-down analytic strategy that applies theory to the data to test that theory; codes are determined ahead of time, as opposed to emerging from the data (Bingham & Witkowsky, 2022).
Descriptive research methods	Numbers and tabulations used to concisely present quantitative information such as average, frequency, mode, and median (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011).
Developmental evaluation	An evaluation approach used to guide a program's adaptation to new and changing realities in complex settings (Patton, 2011).

TERM	DEFINITION
Digital badges	A particular set of metadata or information about the nature of the assessment, experience, or criteria that led to the skills or competency-based outcomes represented; they are like portable mini-certificates in being easy to scan, read, and interpret (Diaz, 2016).
Dislocated workers	Individuals who were terminated or laid off or have received a notice of termination or layoff from employment or were self-employed but are now unemployed, as well as other individuals defined in the Workforce and Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) Sec. 3(15) (U.S. DOL ETA, 2020).
Dual credit	A program where students take college-level courses taught by a high school instructor through their high school. These courses are usually offered in partnership with a college or university and offer both high school and college credit (Stride, Inc., n.d.).
Empirical research	Research methods that derive findings from experimentation or other methods of systematic observation rather than only relying on an underlying theory (Bouchrika, 2023).
Employer and community college partnership	A workforce development collaboration among one or more community colleges and local, regional, or national businesses, groups of firms, a chamber of commerce, industry association, or unions; partners contribute staff, finances, facilities, equipment, on-the-job learning, employment opportunities, labor market, and other leadership toward mutual goals. Community colleges and employers share responsibility for students' success and for meeting local workforce development needs (Leavitt & Leigh, 2023).

TERM	DEFINITION
Evidence-based design	Program model supported by strong, high, or moderate evidence of effectiveness from prior research or preliminary research findings, related research findings, or strong theory (U.S. DOL ETA, 2020).
Exploratory evaluation	Preliminary evaluation approaches to clarify program goals and assessment criteria, provide initial evaluation findings and help design more definitive and informative evaluations (Wholey, 2015).
Formative evaluation	An evaluation conducted during project implementation focused on assessing and improving processes (Office of the Director of U.S. Foreign Assistance: Planning and Performance Management Unit, 2009).
Gap analysis	A process to identify differences between an organization's current situation and its intended situation (Kim & Ji, 2018).
Implementation fidelity	The degree to which an intervention or program is delivered as designed (Breitenstein et al., 2010).
Incumbent worker	Individuals employed with any employer who need training to secure full-time employment, advance in their careers, or retain their current occupations. This includes low-wage and medium-wage workers who need to upgrade their skills to retain employment or advance in their careers and workers who are currently working part-time (U.S. DOL ETA, 2020).
Inductive coding	A bottom-up, emergent coding strategy in which the researcher reads through the data and allows codes to emerge or names concepts as they emerge (Bingham & Witkowsky, 2022).

TERM	DEFINITION
Inferential statistics	Statistical analysis using models to explore or confirm relationships among variables or to generalize findings from a sample to an overall population (Pyrczak & Oh, 2018).
Microcredentials	Short courses that certify a student's knowledge in a specific area; usually demonstrated using badges (Missman, 2023).
New entrants to the workforce	Those who have never worked before or who have been out of the workforce for long enough that they seem to be entering the workforce for the first time; this may include, but is not limited to, long-term unemployed and formerly incarcerated individuals. Also eligible, consistent with federal and state wage and employment laws, are youth enrolled in their junior or senior year of high school/secondary school and who could be employed before or within 6 months after the end of the grant life cycle and youth who have dropped out of school and are seeking their first full-time job (U.S. DOL ETA, 2020).
Observational research	Research approaches that involve observing and recording the behavior of subjects in their natural environment (Rezigalla, 2020).
Outcome evaluation	The systematic collection and analysis of information to determine the results of a program or intervention, assess its merit or value, and make recommendations about subsequent direction or improvement (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011).

TERM	DEFINITION
Outcomes	The primary results of program activities and their subsequent outputs. In a logic model, outputs lead directly to short-term outcomes, short-term outcomes lead to medium-term outcomes, and medium-term outcomes lead to long-term outcomes. Note that *short-*, *medium-*, and *long-term* are defined differently depending on the program. Sometimes time frames are specified; sometimes they are not (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011).
Outputs	The direct products of program activities, such as the number of classes, number of enrollees, and number of products made (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011).
Participatory evaluation	An evaluation approach where all stakeholders have input into the evaluation design, methods, or interpretation of the results (Biden, n.d.).
Pre-apprenticeship	A pre-apprenticeship is a shorter, informal training program to prepare students for an official apprenticeship (Martin & Smith, 2011).
Process evaluation	An assessment conducted during the implementation of a program to see if it is reaching its intended beneficiaries and providing services as intended (Office of the Director of U.S. Foreign Assistance: Planning and Performance Management Unit, 2009).

TERM	DEFINITION
Sector strategies	A strategic approach to engage employers by bringing together industries critical to the economic success of a region and identifying the skills necessary to build the region's talent pipeline (U.S. DOL ETA, 2016).
Self-paced learning	Participants' completion of coursework at their own pace rather than during set classroom times (U.S. DOL ETA, 2020).
Stackable courses	Individual courses that together build specific skills or knowledge in a particular area (Cellars, 2022).
Stacked credentials	Credentials that can be earned in sequence and build upon previously learned content as individuals progress along a career pathway or up a career ladder (U.S. DOL ETA, 2020).
Strategic partnership	Collaborations in which community colleges work with multiple employers across an industry sector to design career pathway programs with stackable credentials. Employers may cover tuition, make hiring commitments, contribute equipment in-kind, provide financial resources, or establish registered apprenticeships (U.S. DOL ETA, 2020).
Summative evaluation	Evaluation of a program in its later stages, or after completion, to assess whether it achieved its intended outcomes and attained sustainability; these evaluations are often used to inform future programs (Office of the Director of U.S. Foreign Assistance: Planning and Performance Management Unit, 2009).

TERM	DEFINITION
Systems change	"Efforts and initiatives that go beyond providing direct services to individual jobseekers and aim to transform how organizations effectively support employers and the workforce" (Bernstein & Martin-Caughey, 2017, p. 1).
Target	*Target* can use quantitative or qualitative indicators and describes the project's desired intended results at the end of the grant period of performance.
Thematic qualitative approach	A six-step process consisting of familiarization, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing up the results (Kiger & Varpio, 2020).
Third-party evaluator	"A qualified professional trained and experienced in the techniques to be used in the evaluation" who is not an employee or otherwise an affiliate of the program being assessed (Heinemeier et al., 2014).
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)	"Signed into law in 2014, this legislation is 'designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy" (U.S. DOL ETA, n.d.).
Workforce development system	An integration of activities, policies, and programs designed to create, sustain, and retain a workforce that can support current and future businesses and industries (Haralson, 2010).

Acronyms and Abbreviations*

ABBREVIATION	FULL NAME OR MEANING
DOL	Department of Labor
EDWOSB	Economically Disadvantaged Woman-Owned Small Business
ETA	Employment and Training Administration
FOA	Funding Opportunity Announcement
GRAAHI	Grand Rapids African American Health Institute
GRCC	Grand Rapids Community College
ITA	Individual Training Accounts
KSA	Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NSCC	Northwest State Community College
QNR	Quarterly Narrative Report
RAB	Regional Advisory Board
RFCUNY	Research Foundation CUNY
SCC	Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grants
TAACCCT	Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training
TPE	Third-Party Evaluators
WBL	Work-Based learning
WIOA	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

*This table only includes the four grantees whose names were abbreviated throughout the report. The report does not refer to the additional seven grantees by an abbreviated name and so are not included in the table.

Executive Summary

In its inaugural phase in January 2021, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), through its Employment and Training Administration (ETA), initiated the Strengthening Community Colleges (SCC) Training Grants program. With an initial fund allocation of $40 million, the first round of SCC grants (SCC1) is a critical component of the Department's overarching strategy to broaden the capabilities and capacity of community colleges nationwide. The goals of the SCC Training Grants program are the following:

1. Increase the capacity and responsiveness of community colleges to address the skill development needs of employers and dislocated and unemployed workers, incumbent workers, and new entrants to the workforce;
2. Offer this spectrum of workers and other individuals accelerated career pathways that enable them to gain skills and transition from unemployment to (re)employment quickly; and
3. Address the new challenges associated with the COVID-19 health crisis that necessitate social distancing practices as well as expanding online and technology-enabled learning and migrating services to a virtual environment. (U.S. DOL ETA, 2020).

During this initial phase, ETA awarded 11 four-year grants to a diverse group of recipients: seven consortia[1] led by community colleges and four individual community colleges covering ten states, collectively SCC1. ES-Exhibit 1 displays the location and type (e.g., single institution or consortium) of SCC1 grantees. Approaching their third grant year in January 2024, these grantees are now actively developing workforce training and career pathways in essential industry sectors such as advanced manufacturing, information technology, and health care.

[1] *Consortia* are community college-led grantees charged with addressing capacity building and systems change within one state or across community college systems in the same state. Consortia grantees must also include at least one state- or district-level entity (U.S. DOL ETA, 2020).

ES-Exhibit 1

SCC1 Grantees by Geographic Location

To fulfill their objectives, ETA tasked SCC1 grantees with developing, implementing, and assessing the outcomes of their career pathway and workforce development initiatives. Grantees performed gap analyses to pinpoint local needs in workforce education and training and to identify institutional capacity challenges to be addressed by their SCC programs. Based on these findings and proposed solutions, SCC1 grantees identified specific performance outcomes in their proposals, and ETA worked with grantees to clarify the outcomes where needed (Appendix B). The outcomes focus on four Core Elements that span sector strategies and employer engagement, programming and accelerated learning strategies, alignment of programming with the local workforce, and systems change elements (consortia grantees only). ES-Exhibit 2 outlines the Core Elements required for both single-institution and consortium grantees.

ES-Exhibit 2

SCC1 Core Elements

Core Element #1: Evidence-Based Design*
Core Element #2: Sector Strategies and Employer Engagement
Core Element #3: Enhanced Career Pathways Programs and Accelerated Learning Strategies
Core Element #4: Strategic Alignment with the Workforce Development System
Core Element #5: Innovative Systems Change (consortia grantees only) • *Option A:* Accelerated Learning Pathways • *Option B:* Statewide Data Integration and Use

Note. This analysis does not include Core Element 1: Evidence-Based Design because all grantees have met this requirement by incorporating effective evidence-based strategies in their program planning.

One requirement of the grant is for SCC1 programs to report their progress toward these customized outcomes via Quarterly Narrative Reports (QNRs). Monitoring and assessing progression in these outcomes include determining baseline and target data and tracking changes across the performance period, as well as narrative updates. Measured outcomes and their metrics, as reported in both the interim reports and QNRs, vary within and across the grantees (e.g., number of courses developed, number of students enrolled, number of stackable credentials created) as a function of their customization to each program.

SCC Evaluation Technical Assistance

In January 2022, the DOL contracted Trewon Technologies (study team) to provide evaluation technical assistance to the DOL Chief Evaluation Office, the ETA, and the inaugural round of SCC1 grantees related specifically to third-party evaluators (TPEs) procured by each grantee to design and conduct an implementation evaluation of each SCC1 program. The overall purpose of the evaluation technical assistance is to increase the capacity of the DOL to support grantees in obtaining high-quality, rigorous evaluations of their respective programs. The study team provided SCC1 TPEs with

evaluation technical assistance activities, such as evaluation design reviews, 1:1 office hours, annual SCC TPE meetings, a dedicated TPE evaluation hub website and repository, and interim report guidance and support.

In January 2023, the study team developed a template and related guidelines (see Appendix A in the full report) to guide TPEs in drafting their interim report submissions. ETA approved the template and related guidelines and shared them with grantees and their evaluators for use during the interim report drafting process. ETA encouraged TPEs to submit their draft reports to the study team for review and feedback before final submission to the DOL.

This report synthesizes findings from TPE-conducted implementation evaluations and subsequent interim reports, supplemented by submitted QNRs from March 2023. The synthesis aims to provide an overarching description of SCC1 grantees' progress in implementing their workforce development and career pathways programming and highlight promising practices, implementation barriers, and lessons learned across the grantees. The data sources for this report include nine SCC1 grantees' interim reports (six consortia and three single-institution) and the quantitative data from nine SCC1 grantees' March 2023 QNRs. Two of the SCC1 grantees had not submitted their interim reports at the time of this synthesis. One of the grantees was permitted a delayed implementation timeline and submitted their interim report in December 2023. The final grantee had not submitted an interim report as of the publication of this report. Additionally, this report includes data from 9 out of the 11 QNRs because one grantee submitted incomplete quantitative QNR data, and another did not submit the quantitative portion of the QNR. As such, they could not be included in analyses. The study team incorporated all available data when determining programs' implementation progress and status.

Synthesis Methodology and Analysis Approach

Based on the plans submitted to the DOL, SCC1 evaluations will assess a range of outcomes across the three main areas of SCC participants, employers/workforce, and systems change. However, the interim reports mainly focus on early program outputs

and implementation outcomes, with longer-term outcomes measured in the later stages of the program expected to be shared in TPEs' final reports (anticipated in January 2025). The study team's review of interim reports drew upon early implementation findings in which TPEs reported using an array of data sources, including surveys, interviews, and focus groups conducted with students, faculty, program staff, and program partners, as well as artifacts from QNRs, meeting minutes and observations, project documents, and administrative records.

This summary exhibits the main findings from both a qualitative synthesis of the interim reports and a high-level quantitative descriptive and quartile analysis of the available QNR data. It highlights key implementation findings within each of the Core Elements that emerged across the grantees from the first two years of the performance period and overall lessons learned.

Key Interim Implementation Findings by Core Element

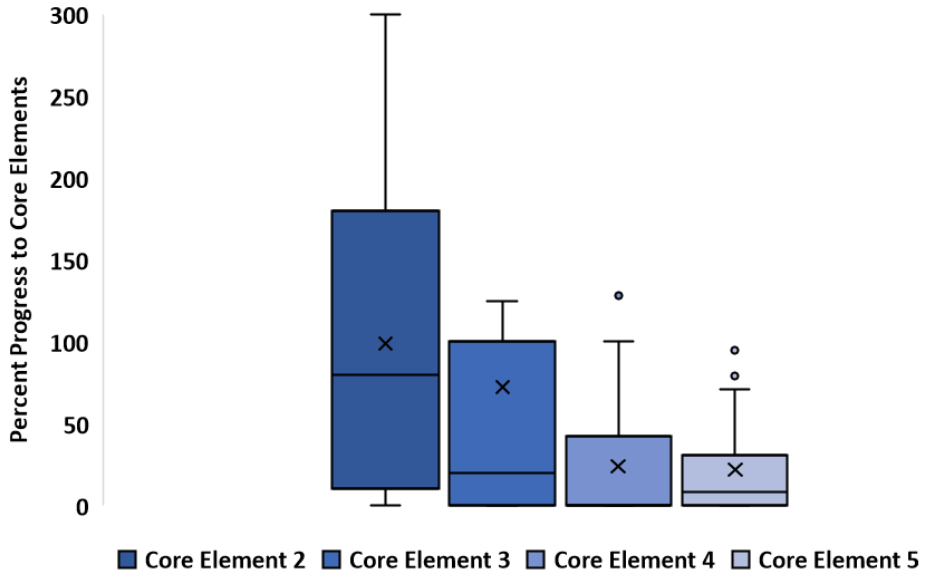
Synthesis of the interim reports and the QNR data showed that grantees are at varying stages of implementation both within institutions (i.e., from program to program) and across consortia institutions. To overcome challenges related to the variance and dispersion of the QNR data and grantees' unique outcomes, metrics, and targets, the study team sorted grantees' percentages of progress from baseline to target into quartiles (0%–25% reached, 26%–50% reached, 51%–75% reached, and 76%–100% reached).[2] Exhibit 3 contains a box and whisker plot displaying the spread of grantees' progress toward their outcome targets as a function of the percentage of completion from baseline to target that also helps to visualize the study team's quartile analysis of grantees' progress. The quartile analysis only includes available quantitative data culled from the March 2023 QNRs.[3]

[2] See the "Methods and Limitations" sections of the full report for a deeper explanation of the quantitative QNR analysis.

[3] Due to missing data sources or variability across sources, the quartile analysis may reveal findings inconsistent with the progress noted in the narrative interim reports. The synthesis aimed to provide insight into all grantees' implementation progress using available data even if not reported consistently in their QNR or interim reports.

ES-Exhibit 3a

Quartile Analysis[b]



[a] Sample size for each Core Element is as follows: Core Element 2 (N = 27), Core Element 3 (N = 40), Core Element 4 (N = 30), and Core Element 5 (N = 16).

[b] Box and whisker plots are useful for comparing datasets, such as the Core Elements, for our quartile analysis of relative grantee progress. These plots display the spread of data as they fall within and across percentiles (0–25th percentile, 26–50th percentile, 51–75th percentile, and 76–100th percentile) as determined by each dataset's median value. The lower line and dash (whisker) note the minimum value (0th percentile) in a dataset, whereas the upper whisker notes the maximum value (100th percentile) in a dataset. Additional data points listed above this maximum value (see Core Elements 4 and 5) are statistical outliers and can be removed for ease of analysis. The two boxes (see Core Element 2) represent the middle 50% of the data, with the lower bound representing the 25th percentile (Q1) and the upper bound representing the 75th percentile (Q3). The line dividing these boxes represents the median value, which can be considered a dataset's middle value (50th percentile, Q2). Last, the X represents each dataset's mean or average value, which often differs from the median, as shown in the figure. These plots provide a useful 5-number summary (minimum, Q1, median/Q2, Q3, maximum) that helps compare datasets, particularly for widely varied data.

The quantitative analysis of the QNR data suggests that grantees met a large percentage of their targets related to Core Element 2 (Sector Strategies and Employer Engagement) during their first two years of implementation. Core Element 2 outcomes saw the most gains, with a median percentage of progress toward grantee targets of 80% progress (ES-Exhibit 3). These outcomes include increases in employers' strategic

involvement and commitment to providing work-based learning (WBL)[4] and accepting program credentials (14 outcomes), the establishment of engagement in a partner advisory board (five outcomes), and the establishment of Memoranda of Use between employer partners (one outcome). The analysis also showed grantees displaying some progress toward Core Element 3 (Enhanced Career Pathway Programs and Accelerated Learning Strategies) with a median progression of 20% completion across a wide variety of outcomes, including the establishment and offering of stackable credits and microcredentials (11 outcomes), increases in the development or enhancement of selected programming and courses (six outcomes), increases in program enrollment (two outcomes), and program completers (two outcomes).[5]

This evidence suggests that SCC1 grantees focused on developing employer and workforce partnerships as an initial step toward informing the development and implementation of newly (re)designed SCC courses and credentialing programs. Core Elements 4 and 5, which focus on workforce system partnerships and sustainability, saw fewer gains in target progression, with medians of 0% and 8%, respectively. Completion of Core Elements 4 and 5 outcomes was markedly low, suggesting that current QNR data may have yet to fully capture grantees' varying degrees of progress toward workforce system partnerships and sustainability. Nevertheless, improved outcomes for these Core Elements, in particular, are expected as grantees continue implementation at their respective institutions.

Key Findings by Core Element

In addition to SCC1 grantees' reported progress toward customized outcomes, the study team identified specific examples of programmatic and implementation practices across Core Elements 2–5.[6] Early recommendations are provided for Core Elements, where these strategies were common themes arising from the data.

[4] See Glossary in the full report for definitions.

[5] See Appendix B in the full report for a complete list of outcomes by grantee.

[6] This analysis does not include Core Element 1: Evidence-Based Design because all grantees have met this requirement by incorporating effective evidence-based strategies in their program planning.

Core Element 2: Sector Strategies and Employer Engagement

Sector strategies combine industry partners, educational institutions, economic development agencies, workforce development systems, and community organizations to meet workforce and labor needs. One key strategy SCC1 grantees implemented was deepening employer engagement, which formed the basis of Core Element 2. Synthesis of data from both the QNRs and interim reports showed that all 11 grantees reported making at least some progress toward their industry targets related to engaging the workforce and other stakeholder partners. Key learnings related to progress on Core Element 2 are enumerated in the following statements in italics and elaborated upon in the subsequent paragraphs.

Key Learnings From Core Element 2

Workforce and industry partners provided leadership and helped to set strategic direction for the SCC program.

Seven grantees used formal structures to develop organized and consistent opportunities to collect partner feedback and suggestions, including clear roles and commitment guidelines when developing their career pathway programs. Six grantees worked with employers and workforce development partners to serve on formal advisory and steering committees.

Workforce and industry partner engagement activities often collected input on identifying and aligning necessary skills and competencies for course objectives.

Six grantees reported working with employer partners to ensure they understood the required knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs). Other grantees also leveraged their industry partners to identify which KSAs their programs should address. In addition to labor specific KSAs, three grantees explicitly noted that industry partners also identified essential “soft skills,” including effective time management, teamwork, and problem-solving.

Workforce and industry partners provided WBL opportunities and pipeline solutions for program participants.

Six grantees engaged employer partners to provide WBL opportunities, including

apprenticeships and on-the-job training. Four additional grantees described employer and workforce development partners assisting by participating in career fairs and informational sessions, vetting ideas related to common hiring platforms for public sector jobs, and providing career and academic advice and on-site recruitment fairs.

Partners assisted grantees with their curriculum development and program (re)design.
Six grantees reported that partners provided input on new and extant curricula, course offerings, proposed schedules, and resources.

Partners informed the design of assessments and validating credentials and provided financial and human capital resources.
A smaller subset of three grantees reported leveraging partner expertise in developing new assessments and credentials.

Key Challenges From Core Element 2

Grantees noted difficulties in engaging partners due to employers' competing priorities and different capacities to participate in sector strategies, including a lack of clear roles and responsibilities defined for each member of the partnership. Likewise, the interim reports highlighted grantees' challenges with inconsistency in institutional tracking of employer engagement and sharing information across institutions in their consortium.

Core Element 3: Enhanced Career Pathway Programs and Accelerated Learning Strategies

Grantee-proposed targets for this Core Element include increases in student recruitment and enrollment, the development of virtual and hybrid offerings, and the creation of stackable and accelerated credentialing opportunities. Interim reports for grantees showed that six programs are currently in the planning and approval phase for new pathways and courses. One caveat with the quantification of grantees with approval to enroll students is that grantees, particularly consortium grantees instituting across multiple campuses, reported having constituent institutions at varying stages of course development. For example, a consortium grantee may have courses in development at one constituent institution. In contrast, another constituent institution in

the same consortium has received approval to modify a similar, currently existing course, and it is now enrolling students.

Key Learnings From Core Element 3

Grantees are creating accelerated credentialing opportunities to provide participants with quick off-ramps from coursework, credentialing programs, or certification programs into the workforce.

Three SCC1 grantees developed and are providing accelerated credentialing opportunities to allow participants to complete their requirements quickly. One additional grantee is in the process of approving a redesigned curriculum using an accelerated model. Eight grantees (re)structured their programming to include more virtual and hybrid opportunities to broaden student access, participation, and completion.

Grantees provide online and distance learning opportunities to increase participation and access.

Five SCC1 grantees, having started transitioning coursework to online offerings due to the COVID-19 pandemic, are making strides in (re)developing their programs to offer in-person, virtual, and hybrid courses.

Grantees are improving access to comprehensive, personalized student support services and career guidance.

Nontraditional students may be more likely to encounter barriers to enrolling in, accessing, and completing postsecondary educational opportunities, including lacking finances and basic needs (e.g., food, housing, health care) and unreliable access to technology (Trewon Technologies, 2022). Five grantees described how they have implemented academic, career, and social services.

Grantees are overhauling career pathways to include competency-based education, self-paced and modularized curriculum, stackable credential programs, and acceptance of prior learning.

In addition to the accelerated curricula, virtual mechanisms, and wraparound services, five grantees reported developing career pathway programs that include competency-based education, are self-paced and stackable, and account for prior learning.

Key Challenges From Core Element 3

Analyses suggest that grantees and TPEs perceived the following areas as barriers to overcome in their implementation:

- Difficulties with faculty and student recruitment with new course offerings;
- Low student engagement and faculty level of comfort with new course formats;
- Administrative bureaucracy for new course/curriculum approvals; and
- Inconsistent access to support services for students.

Core Element 4: Strategic Alignment with the Workforce Development System

Through SCC1 programs, grantees are encouraged to partner with their local workforce development boards, American Job Centers, and other workforce development system partners. Synthesis of the available interim reports and QNRs from 9 of 11 grantees indicated progress in planning and implementing program elements to align strategically with workforce development. It is important to note that several grantees reported making progress in this Core Element but did not entirely complete or meet the outcome. Although this resulted in a "0" in their QNR for this outcome, this number does not fully represent the work these grantees did to move toward meeting this particular outcome, as reported in their interim reports.

Key Learnings From Core Element 4

Grantees are strengthening secondary/postsecondary career and technical education partnerships to improve K–12 pipelines.

Two grantees worked to strengthen program alignment by coordinating engagement and recruitment opportunities for secondary students. Strategies for creating a high school-to-community college pipeline include hosting campus events, providing campus tours, and allowing students to use lab equipment.

Grantees are coordinating with external partners to streamline referrals.

Grantees coordinate with other resource partners to streamline referrals for student services.

Three grantees reported implementing or preparing to implement activities to streamline and expand student support services. Part of this work aligns efforts similarly to

federal—and state-level initiatives such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training.

Recommendations for Strategic Alignment

Findings from the interim report synthesis highlighted early recommendations for positioning SCC programs to strategically align with their local workforce, including the following:

- Leveraging partnerships with partner organizations such as American Job Centers to spread awareness of available resources;
- Ensuring that students, community partners, and industry partners know about opportunities and services available to participants; and
- Engaging community partners consistently to share course and program updates with community members.

Core Element 5: Systems Change Efforts

Single institutions did not address Core Element 5, but the consortia did and ultimately chose between two options. All consortium grantees elected to focus on accelerated learning pathways and so did not include a discussion of statewide data integration and use in their project designs. Five of the seven consortium grantees reported making progress on targets related to Core Element 5. The study team anticipates that QNRs for Q9–Q16 and final grantee reports will provide more detailed insights into consortium grantees' system change efforts and resulting outcomes. As such, grantees reported little change at the interim milestone but anticipate greater progression by the end of the grant period of performance.

Key Learnings From Core Element 5

The limited findings for Core Element 5 identified several areas where SCC1 grantees and subsequent SCC rounds of awardees could proactively address implementation challenges and barriers noted in the reports. These potential solutions include the following:

- **Preparing for program and institutional staff turnover.** Create and maintain standard operating procedures for continuity after grant and program staff turnover.
- **Mitigate complexity with phased implementation.** Consortium projects are often complex and involve multiple institutions and processes. Consider streamlining or staggering planning and implementation where possible.
- **Planning for institutional processes.** Consortia institutions may operate with different resources, materials, and processes. Grant teams should communicate frequently, leverage partnerships to sustain program momentum, and pause plans when necessary to allow time to build out foundational infrastructure.

Promising Practices and Lessons Learned

One goal of this synthesis was to identify and highlight the most successful or beneficial programmatic and implementation practices across SCC1 that the TPEs noted in their interim reports and lessons learned from their collective challenges and barriers. SCC1 interim reports revealed the grantees' varied progression toward their implementation goals and highlighted promising practices, practical strategies, and conditions supporting this progression.

The following takeaways emerged from the qualitative analysis and are intended to provide insight into potential strategies subsequent SCC rounds may use for future programs.

Promising Practices

The following are some of the key practices that grantees and their TPEs noted across the reports as beneficial to SCC implementation:

- Establishing collaborative and often formal partnerships with employers and workforce partners (e.g., local workforce development boards) may help program staff to develop and deliver training and WBL opportunities aligned to local

employers' needs and pain points and to socialize awareness of available resources for their communities.

- Offering employer partners multiple options and levels for engaging in and committing to the SCC programs, from participating in formal advisory boards to providing scholarships and apprenticeships, provides opportunities for broadening participation and buy-in.
- Crafting accelerated, accessible, and engaging career pathway opportunities via technology, hybrid coursework, credit for prior learning, stackable credits, and WBL may contribute to improved recruitment, enrollment, and completion rates.
- Building bridges and pipelines between local high schools' career and technical education programs and the community colleges through marketing, recognition, and support of microcredentialing systems can be a strategy for reaching potential career pathways and workforce development program participants.
- Collaborating and coordinating the referral and delivery of streamlined support services in community colleges (e.g., academic success coaches) and with external organizations (e.g., food banks) may help ameliorate the challenges participants face in successfully enrolling in and completing career pathways and workforce development programs.
- Designing and implementing flexible and adaptable rollout strategies at institutional and system levels, such as standardized manuals, consistent tracking systems, and institution of memoranda of understanding across systems, can foster cohesiveness and commitment, particularly within consortia grantees.

Lessons Learned

The following list captures the emerging reflections, perspectives, and recommendations to guide the planning and execution of current and future SCC programs as identified across the interim reports:

- Implementing and adopting cohesive data-collection and monitoring mechanisms early on (e.g., program planning) may facilitate timely, consistent, and quality performance tracking throughout the life of the award.
- Developing consistent strategies and instruments for soliciting direct feedback from workforce partners, such as a shared website or online file-sharing platform, may help programs leverage partners' expertise to align their programming more efficiently with employer needs.
- Ensuring consortia program leaders deeply understand each institution's context, including demographics, staffing turnover, policies, needs, and challenges, can mitigate take-up and scaling barriers.

Interim findings underscored barriers and challenges SCC1 grantees face in meeting their intended implementation and outcome targets. The study team noted that the nature of the outcomes varied based on each program's implementation timeline and its proximity to activities and outputs. From these findings, the full report identifies additional practices, challenges, and lessons learned when implementing similar initiatives. More comprehensive results are expected with final reports for SCC1 grantees (anticipated January 2025).

Introduction

In January 2021, the United States Department of Labor (DOL) launched the Strengthening Community Colleges (SCC) Training Grants Program through its Employment and Training Administration (ETA), awarding $40 million in grants in the first round. SCC is a specialized grant program vital to the DOL's strategy to enhance the capacity of community colleges across the United States and foster an alignment with labor market demands and an increase in workforce diversity and equity, thus supporting economic competitiveness (U.S. DOL ETA, 2020). In its first round of funding (SCC1), the DOL awarded 11 four-year grants to seven consortia (each with a community college lead grantee) and four single-community college institutions across ten states.[7] Operating in various regions of the United States, the SCC1 grantees have developed and are currently implementing workforce development and career pathways programs to address the national demand for skilled workers in key industry sectors (U.S. DOL ETA, 2020).

Per the DOL ETA Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA), the goals of SCC1 programming are threefold, as follows:

1. To increase the capacity and responsiveness of community colleges to address the skill development needs of employers, dislocated and unemployed workers, incumbent workers, and new entrants to the workforce;
2. To offer this spectrum of workers and other individuals accelerated pathways that enable them to gain skills and transition from unemployment to (re)employment quickly; and
3. To address the new challenges associated with the COVID-19 health crisis, which necessitate social distancing practices, expanding online and technology-enabled learning, and migrating services to a virtual environment. (2020, p. 1)

[7] The DOL defines *community colleges* as institutions of higher education, per Section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act. Consortium grantees must have a community college lead grantee that represents other institutions of higher education and must involve at least one state- or district-level entity (2020).

The charge of the SCC1 program was for grantees to develop and evaluate the effectiveness of programs providing career pathways and workforce development across sectors such as advanced manufacturing, healthcare, information technology, and public service. Exhibit 1, as follows, identifies the 11 awarded grantees, their geographic locations, industry sectors, and consortium members (if applicable).

Exhibit 1

SCC1 Lead Grantee Demographics

Single-Institution Grantees

LEAD GRANTEE	CITY, STATE	INDUSTRIES
Broward College	Fort Lauderdale, FL	Information technology, advanced manufacturing (supply chain), healthcare
Long Beach City College	Long Beach, CA	Supply chain and logistics
Northwest State Community College	Archbold, OH	Advanced manufacturing
Virginia Peninsula Community College	Hampton, VA	Construction, shipbuilding, and repair

Consortium Grantees

LEAD GRANTEE	CITY, STATE	INDUSTRIES	CONSORTIUM COLLEGES
American River College (Los Rios Community College District)	Sacramento, CA	Business information	Cosumnes River College Folsom Lake College Sacramento City College (four constituent institutions)

LEAD GRANTEE	CITY, STATE	INDUSTRIES	CONSORTIUM COLLEGES
Forsyth Technical Community College	Winston-Salem, NC	Advanced manufacturing	Alamance Community College Davidson Community College Guilford Technical Community College Montgomery Community College Randolph Community College Rockingham Community College Surry Community College (eight constituent institutions)
Grand Rapids Community College	Grand Rapids, MI	Health care	Alpena Community College Lansing Community College Muskegon Community College Oakland Community College (five constituent institutions)
Mt. Hood Community College	Gresham, OR	Cybersecurity, advanced manufacturing	Central Oregon Community College Chemeketa Community College Clackamas Community College Klamath Community College Lane Community College Portland Community College Rogue Community College Southwestern Oregon Community College (nine constituent institutions)
Norwalk Community College (Board of Trustees of Community-Technical College)	Norwalk, CT	Health care	Gateway Community College Housatonic Community College Middlesex Community College Tunxis Community College (five constituent institutions)

LEAD GRANTEE	CITY, STATE	INDUSTRIES	CONSORTIUM COLLEGES
Queensborough Community College (Research Foundation/CUNY)	New York, NY	Information technology, manufacturing, health care	Borough of Manhattan Community College Bronx Community College Hostos Community College Kingsborough Community College LaGuardia Community College (six constituent institutions)
Savannah Technical College (Technical College System of Georgia)	Savannah, GA	Information technology, manufacturing, health care	Athens Technical College Central Georgia Technical College Coastal Pines Technical College Columbus Technical College Georgia Northwestern Technical College Georgia Piedmont Technical College Gwinnett Technical College Lanier Technical College Ogeechee Technical College Southern Regional Technical College Wiregrass Georgia Technical College Atlanta Technical College* Augusta Technical College* Chattahoochee Technical College* Southern Crescent Technical College* West Georgia Technical College* (17 constituent institutions) **added after the grant period began*

Note: The total number of constituent institutions includes the lead grantee.

In addressing the goals mentioned above, grantees conducted gap analyses to identify local workforce education and training needs and the institutional capacity issues their SCC programs will target. Based on these analyses and resulting program designs, the DOL ETA requires single-institution grantees to work toward grant-specific capacity-building performance outcomes across three core elements. In contrast, consortium grantees work to progress grantee-specific capacity-building, and systems change outcomes for four core elements across one or more community college districts within a state. Core Element 1, Evidence-Based Design, is not included in the third-party analysis for any grantees because all grantees have met this requirement by incorporating effective evidence-based strategies into their program planning.

Core Elements span sector strategies and employer engagement, enhanced career pathways programs and accelerated learning strategies, strategic alignment with the local workforce development system, and systems change (consortia grantees only). Monitoring and assessing progress in these outcomes include determining baseline and target data and tracking changes across the performance period. Grantees must report progress toward outcomes in quarterly narrative reports (QNRs). The study team used the QNRs submitted for the first quarter of 2023 to supplement findings shared in the interim reports. Exhibits 2 and 3 display the required core elements for single institution and consortia grantees, respectively.

Exhibit 2

Required Core Elements for Capacity-Building Performance Outcomes: Single Institutions

CORE ELEMENT #2: SECTOR STRATEGIES AND EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT
Outcome Area 2a: Increase in the level and depth of employer engagement and investment in educational and training programs
CORE ELEMENT #3: ENHANCED CAREER PATHWAYS PROGRAMS AND ACCELERATED LEARNING STRATEGIES
Outcome Area 3a: Design or implementation of new, accelerated instructional techniques or technologies, including the use of advanced online and technology-enabled learning
CORE ELEMENT #4: STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT WITH THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM
Outcome 4a: Increase in program and policy alignment across systems and/or decrease in duplicative services or service gaps

Note. There are no required outcomes related to Core Element 1: Evidence-Based Design. See the Glossary for definitions of terms.

Exhibit 3

Required Core Elements for Systems Change Performance Outcomes: Consortia Grantees

CORE ELEMENT #2: SECTOR STRATEGIES AND EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT
Outcome Area 2a: Increase in the level and depth of employer engagement and investment in educational and training programs
Outcome Area 2b: Percentage of employers that change policies to better support work-based learning (WBL) opportunities or employment, retention, and advancement of career pathways participants

CORE ELEMENT #3: ENHANCED CAREER PATHWAYS PROGRAMS AND ACCELERATED LEARNING STRATEGIES
Outcome Area 3a: Design or implementation of new, accelerated instructional techniques or technologies, including the use of advanced online and technology-enabled learning
Outcome Area 3b: Measure of restructuring or alignment of educational and training programs based on local or regional labor market data
CORE ELEMENT #4: STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT WITH THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM
Outcome 4a: Increase in program and policy alignment across systems or decrease in duplicative services or service gaps
Outcome 4b: Development of new or expanded partnerships among key system actors that result in streamlined or expanded services for participants
CORE ELEMENT #5: INNOVATIVE SYSTEMS CHANGE **Option A: Accelerated Learning Pathways**
Outcome Area 5a: Measure of removing significant systemic barriers for career pathways participants
Outcome Area 5b: Increase in linkages developed throughout a career pathway to encompass bridge programs, career and technical training programs, and work-based training
CORE ELEMENT #5: INNOVATIVE SYSTEMS CHANGE **Option B: Statewide Data Integration and Use**
Outcome Area 5c: Increased access to available data on stakeholders' activities, outputs, and outcomes
Outcome Area 5d: Evidence of effective data sharing and data management

Note. There are no required outcomes related to Core Element 1: Evidence-Based Design. See the Glossary for definitions of terms.

SCC Evaluation Technical Assistance

In January 2022, the DOL contracted Trewon Technologies (study team) to provide evaluation technical assistance to the DOL CEO, the ETA (Program Office), and the inaugural round of SCC1 grantees explicitly related to third-party evaluators (TPEs) procured by each grantee. A key aspect of the SCC grant was "to document the capacity built and systems change achieved by grantees . . . and to share information about grantee successes, challenges, and lessons learned" (U.S. DOL ETA, 2020, p. 22). Consequently, participation in the SCC program required "procurement of a TPE to design and execute an implementation evaluation of each funded project" (U.S. DOL ETA, 2020, p. 22). The study team provided evaluation technical assistance directly to the SCC1 TPEs, whereas the grantees received direct programmatic technical assistance from another DOL subcontractor.

The overall purpose of the technical assistance for evaluation is to increase the capacity of the DOL to support grantees in obtaining high-quality, rigorous evaluations of their respective programs. To that end, the study team (a) provides evaluators with one-on-one office hours to afford opportunities for customized support at all stages of the evaluation; (b) facilitates annual meetings and peer-to-peer learning opportunities for collaboration on pertinent evaluation-related topics; (c) furnishes evaluators with evaluation design, implementation, and data-collection troubleshooting; and (d) provides actionable feedback and revision support for evaluation plans through a systemic review of plans and technical assistance focused on tailored feedback and common challenges. The study team also offered support for the interim report submission to the DOL and evaluators. The next section of this report outlines technical assistance the study team gave to SCC1 TPEs.

The FOA required grantees to complete an implementation evaluation and encouraged a developmental approach in which evaluators work with implementers to support a program's adaptation to new and changing realities in complex settings. Two of the 11 grantees elected to adopt the latter. In spring 2022, the study team reviewed and

provided feedback on nine evaluation plans submitted by the SCC1 TPEs before evaluation implementation.[8]

In January 2023, the study team developed a template and related guidelines (see Appendix A) for interim report submissions. The ETA approved the template and related guidelines and shared them with grantees and their evaluators for use during the interim report drafting process. The ETA encouraged TPEs to submit their draft reports to the study team for review and feedback before final submission to the DOL. Eight grantees submitted drafts for review between late March and early April 2023, after which the study team used the approved review guidelines to provide feedback. The remaining three grantees either received an extension (CUNY), had a later implementation timeline (Long Beach), or elected not to submit a draft interim report for review (Savannah Technical Community College). Four study team members participated in reviews from March 30–April 26, 2023, with each draft reviewed by at least two people. The study team offered office hours, as needed, and facilitated feedback meetings to debrief and offer suggestions to strengthen the evaluators' drafts.

Although the study team only reviewed draft interim reports for eight of the 11 SCC1 grantees, this report summarizes findings from the nine grantees submitting final interim reports by the May 2023 deadline. One grantee elected not to submit a draft report for review but did submit a final report by the May 2023 deadline.

The following sections of this report summarize findings from the final interim reports submitted by the nine SCC1 grantees (six consortia and three single-institution) and are supplemented with available QNRs from March 2023 submitted by nine grantees.[9] The report includes an overview of the grant program, the methodology and analysis approach, limitations to the study, key findings by Core Element, and lessons learned.

[8] Long Beach Community College was awarded on a different timeline and therefore was not required to submit an interim report until December 2023. At the time of this writing (December 2023), Research Foundation/City University of New York's (CUNY) interim report had not been received by the study team.

[9] The study team received incomplete QNR data from Norwalk and did not receive a QNR for American River at the time of this analysis. As such, they were not included in the Core Element 2, 3, 4, and 5 QNR analysis.

Overview of Grantees

Since their award in February 2021, SCC1 grantees have begun implementing programs to build education and training capacity to supply the local workforce with skilled and knowledgeable employees. SCC1 programs address workforce needs from various industry sectors such as advanced manufacturing, health care, information technology, and cybersecurity, and they are located in geographically diverse areas with varied population demographics. Figure 1 shows the 11 SCC1 grantees and their geographical locations.

Figure 1

SCC1 Grantees by Location

Note. An orange pin indicates a single-institution grantee; a blue pin indicates a consortium. The total number of institutions includes the lead grantee.

SCC Program Requirements and Outcomes

As described previously, grantees were required to develop customized outcomes within each Core Element as a part of their application. After awards were given, the DOL worked with grantees to clarify outcomes as needed. This was a departure from previous awards, such as the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and

Career Training grant program, in that (a) each SCC grantee has unique outcomes, and (b) the outcomes for the SCC grant vary based on the type of applicant, being either a single institution or a consortium. (Each grantee's clarified customized outcomes are shown in Appendix B.) Because of the highly contextualized nature of the SCC outcomes, the metrics reported in interim reports and QNRs were varied and narrowly focused (e.g., number of courses developed, number of students enrolled, number of stackable credentials created) by grantee.

For example, the target outcome for Core Element 2a is an "increase in breadth/depth of employer engagement and investment in educational/training programs." Seven of the 11 Round 1 grantees identified a single customized outcome for this target area. However, four of the 11 grantees (two single-institution and two consortium grantees) had two customized outcomes for this target area.

Within these customized outcomes, the measures identified for the outcomes also varied across grantees. For instance, within Core Element 2a, three grantees sought to establish a new board or committee of industry partners. In contrast, eight aimed to increase the specific number of employer partners engaging with the institution. Additionally, three grantees specifically listed increasing the number of employer partners at the advisory, hands-on, and strategic levels under Core Element 2a.

Core Element 2b is another example of variation in customized outcomes across the full cohort of grantees. All seven consortium grantees had a customized outcome related to Core Element 2b: increase in sector employers making commitments to better support WBL opportunities and/or employment, retention, and advancement of career pathway participants. One single-institution grantee had a customized outcome related to increasing the number of employer partners committing to supporting WBL; however, its outcome was tied to Core Element 2a, not 2b, because single-institution grantees were only required to formulate an outcome for Core Element 2a.

Core Element 3 provides an example of variation within a single-institution grantee's outcomes. Within Core Element 3a, Broward College had three different target outcomes: one related to an increase in the number of workforce education completers receiving or passing industry certifications, one related to a decrease in program

completion time, and one related to an increase in the number of participants completing a degree. Other grantees, such as Northwest State and Long Beach, had one outcome.

In addition to noting variations related to the number of outcomes per core element, the study team noted that the nature of the outcomes varied based on each program's implementation timeline and its proximity to activities and outputs. For instance, all the SCC1 programs focused on establishing workforce partnerships by enacting advisory boards and other strategies (Core Element 2: Sector Strategies and Employer Engagement) as one of their first activities because subsequent activities and outcomes (e.g., developing programs and curricula aligned with employer needs) leverage employer engagement. In contrast, some core elements and associated outcomes are not intended to be addressed or reached until full scale-up and implementation are reached, such as Core Element 5: Innovative Systems Change. Accordingly, grantees reported very little change at the interim milestone but anticipated greater progression by the end of the grant performance period.

Despite this mixed context, employer and workforce outcomes comprise the largest share of outcomes incorporated into the evaluation plans and interim report findings. Such outcomes are intended to address improvement or increases in engagement with employers and other entities from the workforce development system, often through formal partnerships. Other areas of interest include more informal activities and the employers' willingness to implement on-site training opportunities, such as apprenticeships and internships.

SCC1 programs' systems and institutional outcomes were focused on improving efficiency in delivering career pathways and workforce development programs within and across institutions. These outcomes included decreasing the time to program completion, establishing dual credit or articulation agreements, and building policies and mechanisms for smoother credit transfer. Other outcomes included building digital capacity, where programs identified the use of technology to provide students with access to online continuing education units, online labs, virtual reality classes, and

learning systems. Finally, institutions are working toward building programs better aligned with workforce needs, skills, and knowledge.

Each grantee's clarified customized outcomes are shown in Appendix C.

Sample, Methodology, and Analysis Approach

The sample for this analysis includes nine submitted interim reports and nine submitted March 2023 QNRs for the first round of SCC grantees. Exhibit 4 depicts the data source(s) used by each grantee to compile this report.

Exhibit 4

Interim Report Synthesis Data Source(s) by Grantee

GRANTEE	INTERIM REPORT	MARCH 2023 QNR
American River	Yes	No
Broward	Yes	Yes
Forsyth	Yes	Yes
Grand Rapids	Yes	Yes
Long Beach	No	Yes
Mt. Hood	Yes	Yes
Northwest State	Yes	Yes
Norwalk	Yes	No
RFCUNY	No	Yes
Savannah	Yes	Yes
Virginia Peninsula	Yes	Yes

Note. The study team received incomplete QNR data from Norwalk and did not receive a QNR for American River at the time of this analysis. As such, they were not included in the Core Element 2, 3, 4, and 5 QNR analysis.

Qualitative Sample

Eight of the nine grantees that submitted an interim report by April 2023 used a descriptive design, which is appropriate given the evaluations' small sample sizes and purpose. The evaluations are primarily treatment group-only studies with some eventual within-group comparisons based on SCC grantees' demographics. They also described to what extent project activities were carried out and progressed toward proposed outcomes. Appendix C displays the evaluation approaches and designs across SCC1 interim reports.

The interim evaluation reports included a range of mixed-methods data, including surveys, focus groups, interviews, document reviews, observations, and administrative data reviews. A table of interim report data sources and sampling, as made available by the grantees, is located in Appendix D. However, some limitations, such as a lack of access to administrative data, small student samples, and lagging program implementation precluded TPEs from including intended data gathering and analysis activities and findings in their April 2023 reports. A comprehensive summary of the evaluation limitations described in interim reports is located in this report's "Limitations" section.

Based on the plans submitted to the DOL, SCC1 evaluations aim to ultimately assess a range of outcomes across three main areas: SCC participants, employers and workforce development partners, and systems change. However, the interim reports focus on early program outputs and implementation outcomes, with longer-term outcomes measured in the latter stages of the program and shared in the TPEs' final reports. The next section offers more information on the results and the study team's analysis approach.

Quantitative Sample

In addition to compiling qualitative data from interim reports, the study team gathered each grantee's DOL-customized metrics by core element, derived from each grantee's interim report or its submitted March 2023 QNR, when available. Although the study

team attempted to extract any available quantitative metrics from across the data sources, there is missing data due to incomplete or missing QNRs or inconsistent or missing data from the interim reports. Exhibit 5 displays the list of grantees with available March 2023 QNR data.

Exhibit 5

March 2023 QNR Data Sample[a]

	CORE ELEMENT 2	CORE ELEMENT 3	CORE ELEMENT 4	CORE ELEMENT 5
# Grantees Expected	11	11	11	7
# Grantees Represented	9 (82%)	9 (82%)	9 (82%)	5 (71%)

Note. The study team received incomplete QNR data from Norwalk and did not receive a QNR for American River at the time of this analysis. As such, they were not included in the Core Element 2, 3, 4, and 5 QNR analysis.

Qualitative Analysis

The study team employed a thematic analysis to analyze SCC1 grantees' interim evaluation reports because of its theoretical flexibility and emphasis on emerging themes. Thematic analysis is a six-step process consisting of familiarization, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing up the results (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). Previous evaluation technical assistance activities and extant DOL documents informed and contextualized the interview analysis. These include TPE evaluation plans, grantee proposals, logic models, and notes from TPE office hours and meetings.

Informed by these activities and guided by the SCC1 FOA (U.S. DOL ETA, 2020), the study team first conducted a complete reading of each interim report to familiarize themselves with the data. The team used a spreadsheet to compile key findings from each grantee's report. Next, the study team created an initial codebook guided by the

core elements as outlined in the FOA. Two coders independently coded initial subsets of interim reports to determine whether other patterns in the narratives should be captured in an inductive addition to the codebook. The study team recoded their initial documents and remaining reports using a constant comparative method. The constant comparative method is an iterative approach to qualitative analysis with origins in grounded theory (Stewart, n.d.). Key benefits of using this approach include its fluid and adaptable nature, the depth of insight that can be achieved, the inherently reflexive nature of the analytic technique, and the validity achieved through the extensive cross-checking and corroboration of data (Stewart, n.d.).

See Exhibit 6 for themes used to analyze grantees' interim reports.[10]

Exhibit 6

Core Element Themes

CORE ELEMENT	SUB-ELEMENT THEME
Core Element 2: Sector Strategies and Employer Engagement	Employers provided leadership Employers set strategic directions Employers helped identify skills or competencies for the program Employers provided WBL Employers assisted with curriculum development Employers assisted with program design Employers informed the design of an assessment Employers validated credentials to address industry skill needs Employers provided resources (e.g., mentors, equipment, facilities

[10] This analysis does not include Core Element 1: Evidence-Based Design because all grantees have met this requirement by incorporating effective evidence-based strategies in their program planning.

CORE ELEMENT	SUB-ELEMENT THEME
Core Element 3: Enhanced Career Pathway Programs and Accelerated Learning Systems	Accelerated credentialing Course enhancements Competency-based education and assessment Credit for prior learning Prior learning assessments Modularized curricula Self-paced curricula Contextualized remediation Dual enrollment Comprehensive and personalized student support services and career guidance Stacked credentials Online or distance learning Advanced training technologies
Core Element 4: Strategic Alignment With Workforce Development Systems	WBL Secondary and postsecondary partnerships Streamlining or expanding services
Core Element 5: Innovative Systems Change (Consortia Grantees)	Policy change
Additional Inductive Themes	Themes Enablers of implementation Enablers of evaluation Challenges to implementation Challenges to evaluation Challenges in reporting Lessons learned across core elements

After coding, the study team parsed the coded data into Excel spreadsheets based on saliency and co-occurrences. Within each SCC1 program and core element, the study team analyzed the coded excerpts by patterns and cross-patterns. The study team independently synthesized each program's overall implementation themes and patterns,

noting areas of progression, challenges, and lessons learned. This step of the process formed the basis of the within-case analysis.

Team members collectively synthesized coded excerpts across programs to identify overarching findings within and across the core elements using an analytic matrix approach (Miles et al., 2014). Findings reflect salient patterns and findings across the sample and highlight noted differences.

Quantitative Analysis

The study team conducted a descriptive analysis of quantitative grantee data when available. The analysis included calculating each available grantee's reported percentage of target completions from its benchmark to its target goals as of March 2023. However, because of the highly contextualized and specialized nature of each grantee's outcomes, defining *progress* and conducting a comparable 1:1 quantitative cross-analysis of grantees' outcome targets was not feasible. For example, single institutions were required to report on fewer Core Elements (3) and outcome areas (3) compared to consortia grantees (four and eight, respectively). Likewise, grantees may have selected only one measure to track for each outcome area or may have selected several as separate outcomes and measures or as subcomponents of an outcome area measure.[11]

For example, five SCC1 grantees defined their target outcomes via changes year-over-year (e.g., "year 1: 0–13 workforce education completers," "year 2: 13–145 workforce education completers"), whereas four other SCC1 grantees identified and measured progress against a total to be reached at the end of the period of performance (e.g., "A total of 50 [Workforce and Innovation Opportunity Act] WIOA individuals are also enrolled in [Institution] by year 4 of the grant."). This proved problematic for the analysis, as grantees measuring progress across the entire grant period rather than in yearly increments displayed a smaller percentage toward completion than their counterparts.

[11] See Long Beach City College Outcome Area 4a outcomes in Appendix B for an example.

Such variance was a barrier to accurately comparing grantees' progress in meeting their targets.

For this reason, in consultation with the CEO, the study team conducted an initial quartile analysis to develop a high-level snapshot of how performance outcomes and progress toward completion compared across grantee institutions. The study team converted these findings into box and whisker plots (Figure 2). Descriptive analytics suggested a high degree of skewness in the reported data and several notable outliers within each component, which made quantitative comparison across institutions challenging given the current dataset. The study team's analysis suggested that the prominent issue with the current data matrix is inconsistency in the reporting expectations of grantees, specifically regarding which data to include and how they should be reported. As a result, care should be taken when inferring results based on the initial quartile analysis because it does not provide a sufficient comparative measure across performance outcomes.

Descriptive analyses of the QNR data found indicators of an abnormal distribution, including outliers and skewness. This is consistent with the variations and irregularities seen in the QNR data as a function of the individualized outcomes and metrics as well as data availability. Given these challenges and the limited sample size and availability of QNR data (see Exhibit 5), the study team elected to report grantees' quantitative progress data using quartiles. Quartiles are considered an acceptable nonparametric analysis for mitigating and reporting problematic data, particularly datasets with limitations due to small sample size, abnormal distribution, outliers, and skewness.

One of the main goals of this report is to describe SCC1 grantees' progress in implementing their programs, including the extent to which they are meeting their intended outputs and short-term outcomes. Given the nature of the quantitative data, robust statistical comparative analyses are not feasible at the interim milestone.[12] However, using quartiles illustrates the distribution across the grantees, including

[12] The study team anticipates the potential to conduct more rigorous comparative analyses in the final report based on more consistent and complete data sources.

spread and variability, which may be better interpreted than overall indicators of central tendency (e.g., mean, median). This report is based on the quartile results as one contextual element in describing and comparing grantees' high-level progression in meeting their intended targets for each core element as of March 2023. The qualitative analysis of the narrative interim reports provides more detailed descriptions and comparisons within and across core elements and grantees.

This report's findings are organized by core elements, with each section providing an overall summary, key examples, and critical challenges to implementation where available. The report concludes with an overview of the findings and lessons learned.

Limitations

The following synthesis and its findings have three limitations readers should consider when interpreting results. First, the primary sample and data sources for this synthesis include the interim reports as authored and submitted by SCC1 TPEs. Findings derived from the interim reports are highly context-specific and primarily based on each grantee's progress toward meeting their unique outputs and outcomes, with each grantee engaged in different stages of implementation. Because this was the first round of a capacity-building demonstration grant, the DOL allowed grantees broad latitude in defining customized outcomes within the categories provided, which resulted in widely varying measures. Additional information on interim report data sources, sample sizes, participant selection, and demographic data, as reported by grantees' TPEs, is in Appendix D.

Second, the amount and quality of qualitative data varied across interim reports regarding participant selection and sampling, and the richness of data was often uneven and inconsistent, particularly for consortium grantees. Six evaluators named low response rates as a limitation of their findings. Four evaluators noted that delayed project implementation and the timing of interim reports affected their ability to collect data on program outcomes, and two additional evaluators described challenges with gaining access to students, employers, and workforce development partners. Two evaluators described challenges collecting data across consortia when reporting

mechanisms or data collection needs were inconsistent. The turnover of program staff posed challenges to two evaluators, resulting in a lack of data and limitations in their findings.

A third limitation was the variation of evaluator resources available to commit to the project, which may have been directly related to the level of grantee investment in a high-quality evaluation. One evaluator named limited budget resources as a limitation of data collection, resulting in the evaluator's ability to collect data at only four of their consortium grantee's nine constituent institutions.

All these contextual considerations and limitations informed this report's analyses, methodologies, and findings. Moreover, in conjunction with the variations within the QNR data, these limitations made conducting comparative analyses of nuanced metrics and measures challenging. The study team attempted to address the limitations of QNR data by providing high-level descriptive findings. Despite these challenges, the study team remains confident that the structure already instituted in the revised evaluation plan templates and review process for the second and third rounds will strengthen findings in future interim report summary deliverables. Furthermore, the conclusions of this report will provide the DOL with insights into early implementation successes and challenges and contextualize to what extent implementation activities contributed to the outcomes and summative evaluation findings offered after the SCC1 grant period.

Key Findings by Core Element

Overall findings across the core elements highlight how community colleges are making unique yet disparate strides in establishing collaborative and often formal partnerships with employers and workforce partners (10 grantees); developing learning opportunities for accelerated and accessible career pathways through technology, stackable credits, and WBL (nine grantees); developing pathways and courses that directly align to the knowledge, skills, and abilities their local employers need from their prospective employees (six grantees); supporting successful systems change using cohesive recruitment strategies (three grantees); securing buy-in from internal and external partners; and relying on gap analysis and solution development. Because of the timing

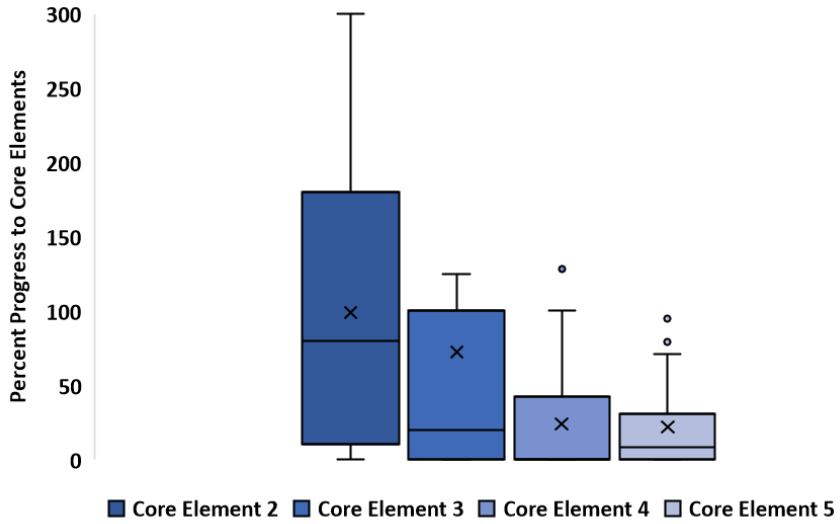
of the interim reports and early phases of implementation, not all grantees are positioned to meet or report on some core elements, particularly outcomes related to student enrollment, systems change, and workforce alignment. The following findings reflect this reporting trend with Core Elements 2 and 3 containing more comprehensive results.

The synthesis of the available interim reports and QNR data suggests that grantees are at varying stages of implementation, both within institutions and across consortia institutions. To overcome challenges related to the variance and dispersion of the QNR data and grantees' unique outcomes, metrics, and targets, the study team sorted grantees' percentages of progress from baseline to target into quartiles (0%–25% reached, 26%–50% reached, 51%–75% reached, and 76%–100% reached). Several outcomes provided by grantees for Core Elements 2, 3, and 4 reported percentages of progress much greater than comparative data points within and across grantee institutions. Thus, the study team removed nine data points from the initial analysis to provide a more reasonable comparison of QNR data across grantee institutions.

Figure 2 shows a box and whisker plot that displays the spread of grantees' progress toward their outcome targets. Box and whisker plots are useful for comparing datasets such as the Core Elements for the study team's quartile analysis of relative grantee progress. The lower line and dash (whisker) note the minimum value (0^{th} percentile) in a dataset, whereas the upper whisker notes the maximum value (100^{th} percentile) in a dataset. Additional data points listed above this maximum value (see Core Elements 4 and 5) are statistical outliers and can be removed for ease of analysis. The boxes (see Core Element 2) represent the middle 50% of the data, with the lower bound representing the 25^{th} percentile (Q1) and the upper bound representing the 75^{th} percentile (Q3). The line dividing these boxes represents the median value, which can be considered a dataset's middle value (50th percentile, Q2). Last, the X represents each dataset's mean or average value, which often differs from the median, as shown earlier. These plots provide a useful 5-number summary (minimum, Q1, median/Q2, Q3, maximum) that helps compare datasets.

Figure 2[a]

Grantees' Progress Toward Their Outcome Targets[b]



[a] Sample size for each Core Element is as follows: Core Element 2 (N = 27), Core Element 3 (N = 40), Core Element 4 (N = 30), and Core Element 5 (N = 16).

[b] Box and whisker plots are useful for comparing datasets, such as the Core Elements, for our quartile analysis of relative grantee progress. These plots display the spread of data as they fall within and across percentiles (0–25th percentile, 26–50th percentile, 51–75th percentile, and 76–100th percentile) as determined by each dataset's median value. The lower line and dash (whisker) note the minimum value (0th percentile) in a dataset, whereas the upper whisker notes the maximum value (100th percentile) in a dataset. Additional data points listed above this maximum value (see Core Elements 4 and 5) are statistical outliers and can be removed for ease of analysis. The two boxes (see Core Element 2) represent the middle 50% of the data, with the lower bound representing the 25th percentile (Q1) and the upper bound representing the 75th percentile (Q3). The line dividing these two boxes represents the median value, which can be considered a dataset's middle value (50th percentile, Q2). Last, the X represents each dataset's mean or average value, which often differs from the median, as shown herein. These plots provide a useful 5-number summary (minimum, Q1, median/Q2, Q3, maximum) that helps compare datasets, particularly for widely varied data.

The data shown in Figure 2 highlight that the most grantee progress has been made toward Core Element 2, with its median value (80%) being higher than that of Core Elements 3 (20%), 4 (0%), and 5 (8%). Conversely, the lowest relative progress completion has been made toward Core Element 4 because its median value equals its minimum value (0% progress). These metrics allow us to draw comparisons of the relative progress made by grantees at this interim phase of their implementation and highlight areas to watch for future improvement.

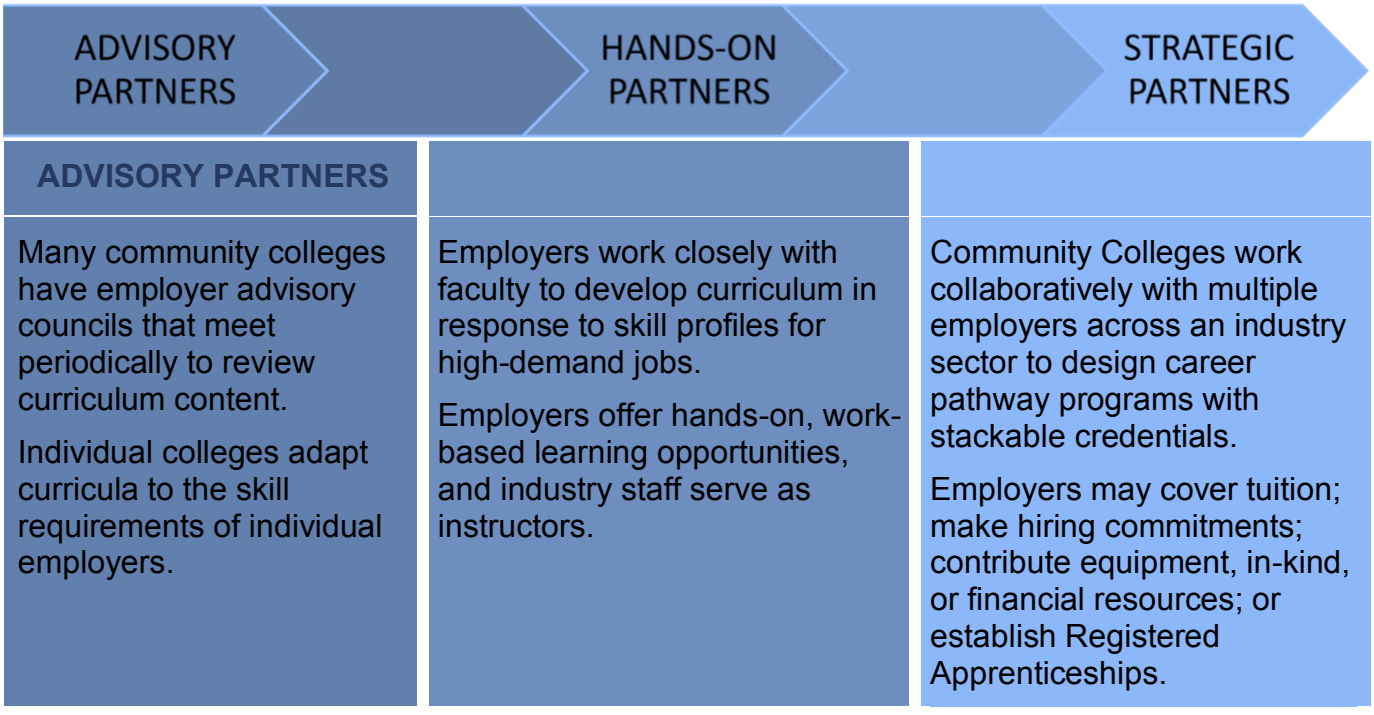
The following sections outline the quantitative and qualitative findings organized by each Core Element, offering key findings with substantive examples of promising practices and challenges where appropriate and available. Case study examples are taken either from the grantee meeting the highest percentage of its targets based on data from QNRs or from grantees exhibiting innovative or promising practices.

Core Element 2: Sector Strategies and Employer Engagement

Sector strategies combine industry partners, educational institutions, economic development agencies, workforce development systems, and community organizations to meet workforce and labor needs. Deepening employer engagement was a key strategy employed by SCC1, which formed the basis of Core Element 2. The FOA includes a graphic illustrating the spectrum of engagement from advisory to strategic (see Figure 3 below).

Figure 3

Graphic From FOA Illustrating Spectrum of Employer Engagement[13]



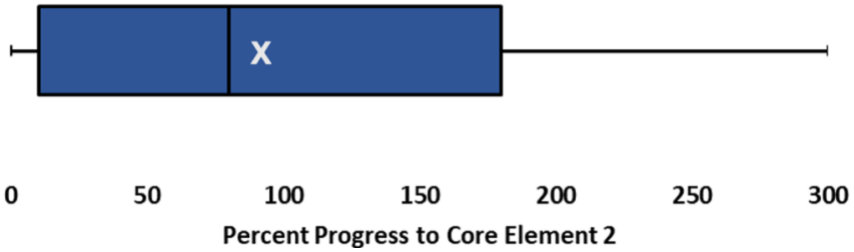
[13] Recreated from U.S. DOL ETA FOA (2020).

According to earlier research efforts that incorporated listening sessions that the study team conducted with SCC1 grantees, participants noted that career pathways "models that develop intentional collaboration strategies between community colleges, public workforce development agencies, and employers are most successful when they leverage each entity's key resources, expertise, data, and capacity to provide services" (Trewon Technologies, 2022, p. 1). Additionally, building intentional partnerships may often result in programming that is more responsive to participant needs, allowing partners to leverage one another's unique strengths and resources and diminishing harmful impacts from competition (Karam et al., 2022; Trewon Technologies, 2022). To that end, the DOL's expectation stated explicitly in the FOA was that the grantees would work toward strategic-level engagement.

Synthesized data from across the available QNRs and interim reports indicated that all 11 grantees reported making at least some progress toward their industry targets related to engaging the workforce and other stakeholder partners, with the largest percentage gain reported for Core Element 2 (Sector Strategies and Employer Engagement) during their first two years of implementation. Core Element 2 outcomes saw the most gains with a median percentage of progress toward grantee targets of 80% progress. These outcomes include increases in employers' strategic involvement and commitment to providing WBL and accepting program credentials (14 outcomes), the establishment and engagement in a partner advisory board (five outcomes), and the establishment of memoranda of use between employer partners (one outcome). This evidence suggests that SCC1 grantees focused on developing employer and workforce partnerships as an initial step toward informing the development and implementation of newly (re)designed SCC courses and credentialing programs.

Figure 4[a]

Core Element 2: Quartile Spread[b]



[a] Sample size for Core Element 2 is N = 27.

[b] As described herein, box and whisker plots provide a 5-number summary (minimum, Q1, median/Q2, Q3, maximum) to help visualize the spread of a dataset and allow for a quick comparison of relative grantee progress toward completion of Core Element 2. The data shown display the following 5-number summary: 1) minimum (0th percentile) of 0%; Q1 (25th percentile) of 10%; median/Q2 (50 percentile) of 80%; Q3 (75th percentile) of 180%; and maximum (100th percentile) of 300%. Additionally, the X represents the mean value of progress toward Core Element 2, which is 99.1% across grantee institutions.

Grantees reported codeveloping knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) with workforce partners and aligning them to course objectives (six grantees); obtaining input from a partner advisory board on equipment and offerings within a new facility (one grantee); securing employers committed to hiring program graduates and providing WBL opportunities (seven grantees); and partnering with state education agencies to codevelop badges (akin to portable mini-certificates [Diaz, 2016]) and stackable credits within their career pathways (one grantee).

Next, the report delves more deeply into the interim report's subfindings that describe how grantees engaged workforce and industry partners, followed by a case study of one SCC1 grantee implementing workforce partner engagement activities. Figure 5 highlights some successful employer partnership activities across SCC1.

Figure 5

Collaboration Highlights

Savannah Technical consortium instituted program advisory committees of business and community representatives to gather industry feedback while planning their course progression and contents.
Northwest State created an advanced manufacturing steering committee to assist with developing two hybrid certificate programs and provide input on industry needs.
Virginia Peninsula created a trades advisory board to provide feedback on developing a new trades facility and student recruitment.
Other grantees collaborated and strategized with employers and workforce development partners to develop ongoing engagement strategies and identify

1. Workforce and industry partners provided leadership and helped set strategic direction for the SCC programs.

According to the interim reports, grantees recruited workforce and industry partners to collaborate for various needs and serve in different capacities. Seven grantees used formal structures to develop organized and consistent opportunities to collect partner feedback and suggestions, including clear roles and commitment guidelines when developing their career pathway programs. For instance, six grantees worked with employer and workforce development partners to serve on formal advisory and steering committees. The purpose of the committees was to provide relevant input to the colleges for programmatic planning and implementation. The reports' findings showed that the results helped program implementers realize the benefits of receiving information about industry needs directly from partners, providing insights necessary to develop opportunities for participants to gain the specific skills needed to support local

employers. Workforce and industry partner engagement activities often collected input about identifying and aligning necessary skills and competencies for course objectives.

Six grantees reported working with employer partners to ensure they understood the required KSAs. One example of this strategic partnership is Northwest State, where SCC1 program implementers worked with industry partners to incorporate required and requested competencies for the successful employment of participants into course content. Furthermore, their partners outlined the needed KSAs and types of equipment and software that students should be familiar with. Northwest's industry partners also provided in-person workplace tours to community college staff and program implementers to expose them to current labor practices and to align course content, required machinery, and industry standards.

In addition to labor-specific KSAs, the report noted that industry partners also identified essential "soft skills," including effective time management, teamwork, and problem-solving.

Other grantees leveraged their industry partners to identify which KSAs their programs should address. For instance, the Forsyth Technical Consortium created a Business and Industry Leadership Team to help it identify KSAs and map them onto course objectives. Similarly, Virginia Peninsula, American River, and Grand Rapids recruited partners to serve on advisory boards to help implementers identify needed job skills for health care and other sectors. Finally, Mt. Hood engaged in a badging work group with partners, developing 28–30 new badges to incorporate into their programs. In addition to labor specific KSAs, three grantees explicitly noted that industry partners also identified essential "soft skills," including effective time management, teamwork, and problem-solving.

2. Workforce and industry partners provided WBL opportunities and pipeline solutions for program participants.

Six grantees engaged employer partners to provide WBL opportunities, including apprenticeships and on-the-job training. Additionally, workforce partners worked with

grantees to identify and make long-term improvements to long-standing pipeline, accessibility, and hiring challenges. For example, one employer partnered with Broward to create a unique certification program and agreed to provide recruitment, training, and potential placement of part-time associates. Faculty at Mt. Hood stated that industry partners were providing students with opportunities that reflected the workplace, recruiting students for the program, or hiring for careers following completion. Four additional grantees described employer and workforce development partners assisting by participating in career fairs and informational sessions, vetting ideas related to common hiring platforms for public sector jobs, and offering career and academic advice as well as on-site recruitment fairs.

Figure 6 describes Forsyth Technical's approach to developing pre-apprenticeships and adult apprenticeships.

Figure 6

Forsyth Technical Apprenticeship Highlights

Three institutions in the **Forsyth Technical** consortium implemented summer pre apprenticeship programs to drive recruitment to their advanced manufacturing programs, while other institutions are considering adult apprenticeship models. Adult apprenticeships prepare "unemployed and underemployed adults and out of school young adults (ages 18 24) who can benefit from this level of participation in the workforce (Guildfordwords, n.d.).

3. Partners assisted grantees with their curriculum development and program (re)design.

Another key engagement strategy leveraged by grantees was bringing industry and workforce development partners into the curriculum development and program (re)design processes. Six consortia reported that partners provided input on new and extant curricula, course offerings, proposed schedules, and resources. For example,

Savannah Technical worked with the Georgia Department of Education to develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU), which works to leverage data and resources related to the former's independently developed microcredentials for the state's public high schools, pairing 14 school districts and 14 technical colleges. In doing so, Savannah Technical built a foundation to pilot the development of badges and career pathways into its SCC offerings.

Other notable strategies included offering input as to the types of schedules and course structures that would best accommodate its employees (Northwest); serving as subject-matter experts on curriculum development (Grand Rapids); and reviewing scripts for course videos to give feedback on the extent to which curriculum resources and modules accurately represented job roles, typical procedures, and work environments (Norwalk).

4. Partners informed the design of assessments and validating credentials and provided financial and human capital resources.

A smaller subset of grantees reported leveraging partner expertise in developing new assessments and credentials. This work included collaborating with industry and workforce partners to build stackable credentials (Mt. Hood); vetting certificate credentials and providing input on current industry standards and credentials (Northwest State); and adding 21 employers to industry validation advisory committees (Broward).

5. Employer partners provided student support resources for participants.

Four grantees also reported how employer partners provided various resources such as mentors, wraparound services, course instructors, and tuition assistance for program implementation and participant support. For example, one of Mt. Hood's partners created a scholarship fund to cover participants' cybersecurity professional exam expenses.

Case Study: Core Element 2 - Northwest State Community College

Based on its quarterly narrative reports, **Northwest State** (Ohio) met 100% of its sector strategies and employer engagement targets. To help it achieve these targets, program implementers first collaborated with the workforce development division at their institution, Custom Training Solutions, to identify eight industry partners to participate in a formal steering committee. They also partnered with the Advanced Manufacturing Consortium, which had over 20 members, to provide greater insight into manufacturing labor needs. The interim report highlighted partner perceptions of the successful collaboration, with one industry partner stating:

> *As soon as there's any kind of training program that is created to quickly bring somebody to a point where they can contribute right away, that gets me involved because it's been a very difficult road for 10-plus years trying to find people to enter into the skilled trades market.*

Once the steering committee was formed, its members provided the Northwest State Community College (NSCC) grant team with continuous feedback throughout the development process. Industry partners discussed myriad ways they provided input during development in steering committee meetings and in-person tours of their worksites. These included but were not limited to:

> *provid[ing] input on their greatest needs, the desired skills and knowledge of workers, current industry standards and credentials, the exact equipment, machinery, and software they use, how to align NSCC programs with employer training programs, and the best schedules and structure to accommodate their employees.*

Another industry partner stated that the grant team "captured our ideas with the curriculum, some of the courses that we all know would be helpful, and how they plan on slicing those up into smaller parts."

The report noted that Northwest State's industry partners' positive interaction with the institution was facilitated by clear and timely communication, a spirit of inclusion, intentional listening to employer feedback, and collaborative activities that brought value to the employer partners and Northwest State. Industry partners stated that Northwest State was "very receptive" and kept them "involved in all the right locations." For instance, one partner shared that they "felt very well informed from the very [beginning] of the program."

Key Challenges in Workforce Engagement and Potential Solutions

Despite successfully creating opportunities for industry and workforce partners to engage in the development of their SCC1 career pathways programs, the study team's analysis identified common key challenges in terms of workforce engagement. Reports indicated that grantees encountered difficulties in engaging partners because of employers' competing priorities and different capacities for participating in sector strategies. Other barriers included the lack of clear roles and responsibilities defined for each member of the partnership and inconsistency in institutional tracking of employer engagement and information sharing across institutions within their consortium.

Interim reports revealed potential solutions to these challenges, some from grantees themselves and others from evaluators. These solutions included the following:

- Providing employer and workforce partners multiple opportunities and ways to engage the partnership based on interests, priorities, and available capacity;
- Establishing effective and efficient meeting structures;
- Defining clear partnership roles, responsibilities, and goals; and
- Developing an effective communication plan.

Providing Employer and Workforce Partners Multiple Opportunities and Ways to Engage Based on Their Interests, Priorities, and Available Capacity

To increase partner participation, grantees can provide partners with various roles and levels of commitment to accommodate competing priorities. For instance, Grand Rapids offered levels of partnership: one in which the employer acts as an advisory partner to give feedback on the vision and direction of the overall initiative and to meet more frequently; hands-on partners who meet less frequently but agree to provide WBL opportunities and apprenticeships for students; or strategic partners, who carry an "active role in curriculum development and validation, . . . provide substantial feedback

intended to improve programming and participant outcomes, [and] engage in activities that support WBL models and career pathways."[14]

> *"Getting those folks to really engage with us in the curriculum process and the clinical process has been really important."*
> • Grand Rapids faculty member

In the following quote, the team shared how making space for employers to contribute strengthened their curriculum development process:

> *One of the things that has worked well for us is really getting the subject-matter experts [that are working in the hospitals] involved with the curriculum folks. Getting those folks to really engage with us in the curriculum process and the clinical process has been really important. They don't all have the time to teach because they're working an incredible [number] of hours, but they're willing to give us some time from the different organizations that we're working with to help us enhance the curriculum.*

Establishing an Effective and Efficient Meeting Structure

Grantees and workforce or employer partners can work together to determine a meeting schedule or cadence that ensures timely feedback and informs partners without overburdening them. Intentionally inviting partners to specific meetings based on relevant topics helped partners feel that their time was valued. An employer engagement group member from American River stated:

> *When we did the [Regional Advisory Board (RAB)] outreach meeting, we were careful of curating that [audience and] not necessarily including folks that it might feel like a waste of their time. But we did communicate with them: "This [RAB meeting] is going to be focused on this. You're welcome to join. We just want to*

[14] Quote from Grand Rapids Interim Report, pg. 10.

> *let you know." Because sometimes, if [employers] don't have the floor, they don't want to be invited to things . . . So, we wanted to be really intentional about that.*

Defining Clear Roles, Responsibilities, and Goals and Establishing a Communication Plan

To maximize efficient collaboration, grantees should ensure all stakeholders and partners know their roles and commitments and agree on program goals. At least one grantee found that allowing employers to co-define and codesign their roles in project work and take a leadership role when the employer partner expressed interest made for a stronger partnership. American River's interim report stated:

> *A key effective practice for employer engagement has involved giving the employer an opportunity to explicitly (and actively) share their interests in how they would like to be invested (e.g., in feedback, in curriculum design, in systems change processes). [This] not only helps to invite input but also creates accountability and continued engagement.*

Finally, grantees should consider using a central repository (e.g., website, shared folder) for project information and materials and sharing program goals, progress, and delays with crucial stakeholders.

Core Element 3: Enhanced Career Pathway Programs and Accelerated Learning Strategies

The SCC1 programs must implement career pathways that align with local labor needs and allow for accessibility and accelerated learning. Grantee-proposed targets for this core element include increases in student recruitment and enrollment, the development of virtual and hybrid offerings, and the creation of stackable and accelerated credentialing opportunities. Interim reports for grantees showed that six programs are currently in the planning and approval phase for new pathways and courses. Given the varied nature of grantee programs and programmatic structures, findings suggest that a single grantee could have aspects of its program in the planning and approval phase while enrolling students in other courses or pathways that have been fully developed and approved. For example, Broward intends to create four new pathways. Two of the

pathways have been developed and implemented, and two are currently in the development phase. In other instances, consortium grantees instituting across multiple campuses have courses in development at one institution, whereas another institution has received approval to modify a similar currently existing course and is now enrolling students.

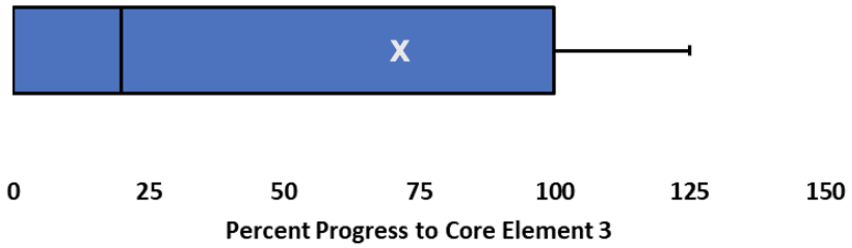
However, some grantees, such as Northwest State (profiled later), reported the successful creation of new programs and have already received the necessary approvals to enroll students. Successfully developed pathways incorporated accelerated credentialing, online and distance learning, improved comprehensive and personalized student support services and career guidance, competency-based assessment, credit for prior learning coursework and assessments, modularized and self-paced curricula, and stackable credentials. In addition to course development, reports said that grantees were preparing to or had already begun aligning, streamlining, and expanding academic and personal student support services such as tutoring, career coaching, emergency financial assistance, and food or clothing aid.

First, we provide an overview of QNR analysis for Core Element 3, followed by a case study of a grantee reporting exemplary progress toward meeting Core Element 3 targets. Then, we highlight the progress of grantees in each of these areas.

The analysis of the QNR data found nine grantees displaying progress toward Core Element 3 (Enhanced Career Pathway Programs and Accelerated Learning Strategies) with a median progression of 20% completion across a wide variety of outcomes, including the establishment and offering of stackable credits and microcredentials (11 outcomes), increases in the development or enhancement of selected programming and courses (six outcomes), and increases in program enrollment (two outcomes) and program completers (two outcomes), as shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7[a]

Core Element 3: Quartile Spread[b]



[a] Sample size for Core Element 3 is N = 40.

[b] As described herein, box and whisker plots provide a 5-number summary (minimum, Q1, median/Q2, Q3, maximum) to help visualize the spread of a dataset and allow for a quick comparison of relative grantee progress toward completion of Core Element 3. The data shown display the following 5-number summary: 1) minimum (0th percentile) of 0%; Q1 (25th percentile) of 0%; median/Q2 (50th percentile) of 20%; Q3 (75th percentile) of 100%; and maximum (100th percentile) of 125%. Additionally, the X represents the mean value of progress toward Core Element 3, which is 72.4% across grantee institutions.

Case Study: Core Element 3 - Northwest State Community College

Based on data provided in the interim report and quarterly narrative report, **Northwest State** reached 100% of its targets related to Core Element 3. A key component of the grantee's program plan was to convert three-credit courses into one-credit courses in computer-aided manufacturing and industrial automation and robotics. These one-credit courses were to be developed in a format that would allow the related certificate programs to be completed asynchronously with minimal on-campus time at an accelerated pace. At the time of the interim report submission, Northwest State had developed two new accelerated programs, converted 12 two- and four-credit courses into 37 one-credit courses, developed knowledge and applications assessments for each one-credit course to allow students an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge before moving on to the next stackable course, and implemented a new registration schedule with six entry points across the year to accommodate the new program schedule.

In addition, the grantee hired two new full-time faculty members for each program to assist with course development, implementation, and instruction; trained faculty on the hybrid delivery model; and created a financial aid package for each certificate program. Program faculty and staff attributed the program's progress to "a high level of institutional support in accommodating and ensuring the success of the new course delivery model [as well as] ensuring relevancy and buy-in from internal and external

partners through individualized discussion and collaboration."[15] Dedicating faculty for the conversion of two- and four-credit courses into one-credit stackable courses may have also helped ensure adequate bandwidth to oversee the conversion process; in addition, the conversion of preexisting courses into one-credit stackable courses may have required fewer institutional approvals than developing entirely new courses.

Case Study: Core Element 2 – Forsyth Technical College

Forsyth's interim report provided qualitative data indicating progress toward key outcomes related to Core Element 3. This grantee leveraged multiple technological tools and software programs to strengthen its ability to offer online and distance learning to participants. Several constituent institutions within the Forsyth consortium purchased apprenticeship management software to streamline processes, boost employer engagement, and increase communication. Three of its constituent institutions supported pre-apprenticeship programs to recruit students for advanced manufacturing programs. One of its constituent institutions, Davidson-Davie, hosted its first campus Apprenticeship Day with 200 high school students in attendance.

Forsyth also made progress in course enhancements, badging, and credit for prior learning, creating three of eight planned machining courses. Moreover, this grantee solidified its institutional infrastructure to support the implementation of competency-based digital badges, electing to use trademarked software to issue badges and support digital badging activities and partnering with Central Carolina Community College, one of its constituent institutions, to develop procedures aligned with state governance and create guidelines for using badge-issuing software. Forsyth was able to hire a coordinator for prior learning assessments, and the implementation team has collected over 750 questions across 22 courses for a new prior learning assessment repository. At the time the interim report was submitted, the grantee had created two machining assessments and received approval for usage. Once courses have been finalized, the grantee expects the full adoption of the related prior learning assessments.

[15] Quote from Northwest State Interim Report, pg. 30.

1. Grantees are creating accelerated credentialing opportunities to provide participants with quick off-ramps from coursework, credentialing programs, or certification programs into the workforce.

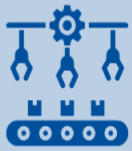
One strategy for boosting career pathway enrollment and completion is to provide opportunities for nontraditional students to quickly begin and complete their coursework, certification, or credentials. Nontraditional students may be less likely to enroll in a long-term course progression, which could impede their ability to upskill or obtain new employment. To help overcome this barrier, three SCC1 grantees provided accelerated credentialing opportunities to allow participants to quickly complete their requirements, and a fourth is in the process of approving a redesigned curriculum using an accelerated model. Eight grantees (re)structured their programming to include more virtual and hybrid opportunities to broaden student access, participation, and completion.

For example, American River convened a curriculum committee to approve a redesigned curriculum using the accelerated college education model and credited its success to weekly curriculum committee meetings, frequent engagement with stakeholders to provide input, and the incorporation of employer survey findings into curriculum design. All five of Norwalk's consortium colleges are now offering multiple accelerated courses and four institution-accelerated programs, shortening them by 2–7 weeks, or by 29%–57%. Likewise, Grand Rapids reported developing four new accelerated and online or hybrid healthcare programs and has adapted two such programs for accelerated and online or hybrid formats. The Savannah consortium developed and issued its first credentials through a fast-track manufacturing course.

2. Grantees provide online and distance learning opportunities to increase participation and access.

Nontraditional students working full-time could benefit from varied ways to access coursework and learning opportunities. Five SCC1 grantees, having already started the transition to online offerings because of the COVID-19 pandemic, are also making strides in (re)developing their programs to offer in-person, virtual, and hybrid courses.

> *"The goal is to provide students with training and equipment that [are] as similar as possible to what they see."*
> • Northwest State faculty member



Analysis of the interim reports identified five grantees who reported conducting activities to increase online and distance learning options for participants. Strategies included either the direct provision of services or the use of software and other technological tools to enhance capacity and skill development.

Northwest State was an exemplar in this area, offering courses with an open lab schedule to allow students the flexibility to schedule hands-on experience and demonstrate competency via hands-on assessments at their convenience. Northwest also provided training to faculty on how to use the hybrid course model and purchased simulation training equipment for labs, resulting in more virtual training machines to meet student needs. One faculty member noted that the institution "more than doubled [its] capacity to actually have a physical controller in [students'] hands as opposed to tripling people up on an actual machine." As a result of the investment in grant funds, Northwest provided robot-controlling equipment that aligned closely with workplace equipment. The robot-controlling equipment increased institutional capacity to provide more students with hands-on experience and eliminated the need to purchase more costly machines. Moreover, the institution could thereby repair older units and buy an additional training machine.

Similarly, the Savannah Technical consortium purchased eight virtual reality simulators and several software packages to assist with advanced instruction. By investing in these technologies, Savannah Technical's consortium institutions expanded their capacity to build augmented reality and virtual reality scenarios, create animated videos, develop e-learning modules, and make lessons more interactive. Savannah's report stated that "several courses took advantage of distance learning capabilities and functionality with their state-supported virtual campus platform."

Three additional grantees provided examples of using SCC grant funds to supplement in-person offerings and develop virtual learning opportunities:

- Five institutions in the Mt. Hood consortium purchased NCSIMUL[16] software to simulate various manufacturing machines virtually and deliver coursework online or in a hybrid format.
- The Forsyth Technical consortium leveraged multiple technological tools and software programs to streamline processes, increase employer engagement, and increase communication.
- Virginia Peninsula increased institutional capacity by continuing to create and offer online or hybrid class options in traditional in-person programs.

[16] NCSIMUL is a trademarked simulation software program owned by Hexagon AB: http://hexagon.com/products/product-groups/cnc-simulation-software/ncsimul.

3. Grantees are improving access to comprehensive personalized student support services and career guidance.

Nontraditional students may be more likely to encounter barriers to enrolling, accessing, and completing postsecondary educational opportunities. Challenges may include lack of finances, basic needs (e.g., food, housing, health care), unreliable transportation or technology access (e.g., internet, computers), competing priorities, limited time, and unfamiliarity with the academic environment and culture. Five grantees described how they had implemented academic, career, and social services.

Grand Rapids offered participants wraparound services such as tutoring, mental health and career counseling, transportation, IT support, basic needs support, and financial support. Furthermore, it engaged its statewide workforce development partner to offer various types of support and provide funding to cover student enrollment.

Similarly, the Norwalk consortium offered a range of holistic support for students, including full access to campus centers and services, individual academic and cocurricular coaching, a limited laptop distribution program, and food pantry and transportation services. Norwalk also offered job placement support for students, including WBL opportunities, assistance with advertising job announcements, résumé writing, and mock interviews.

Mt. Hood developed programs that "allow students in the programs to access services such as job search assistance, workforce preparation, career development, and classroom and WBL opportunities"[17] that are eligible for WIOA funding. See Figure 8 for more details.

[17] Quote from Mt. Hood Interim Report, p. 14.

Figure 8

Grand Rapids Wraparound Services and Partnership Highlights

The Grand Rapids consortium described employers, workforce development boards, and community partners as critical to its recruitment efforts. As the grant team recruits partner employers, it leverages such partnerships to recruit students directly from employers and its local workforce development board. It has also started cultivating relationships with organizations such as the Grand Rapids African American Health Institute, establishing bridge programs for participants who speak English as a second or other language, those currently involved in the justice system, and veteran populations.

4. Grantees are overhauling career pathways to include competency-based education, self-paced and modularized curriculum, stackable credential programs, and acceptance of prior learning.

In addition to the accelerated curricula, virtual mechanisms, and wraparound services, five grantees reported developing career pathway programs that include competency-based education, are self-paced and stackable, and account for prior learning. The following describes notable examples of these efforts:

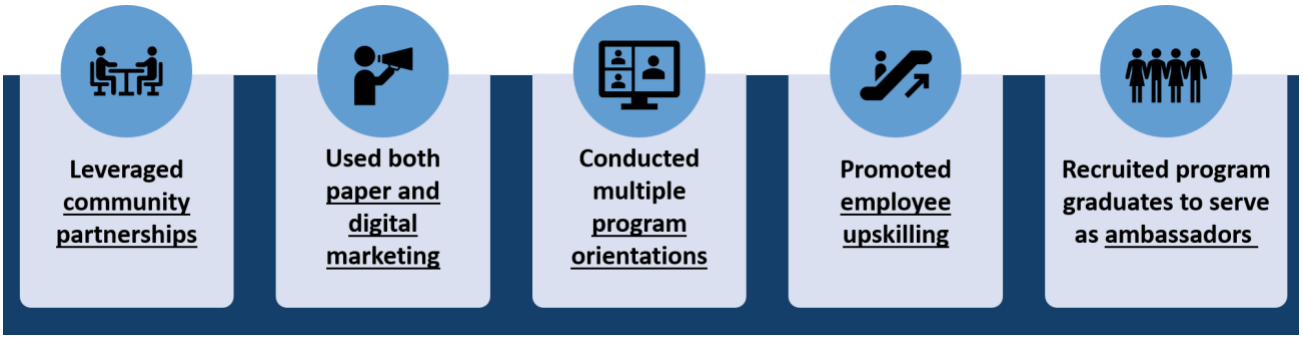
- The Forsyth Technical Consortium has solidified infrastructure to support the implementation of competency-based digital badges and hired a prior learning assessment coordinator to adopt state credential crosswalks for prior learning.
- Mt. Hood is developing an “employability skills” badging framework with the assistance of a consultant hired from the Digital Credentials Institute. This framework increases digital badges that serve as mini certifications verifying students’ skills and accomplishments.

- Northwest State is developing a complete hybrid model of 37 stackable 1-hour credit courses that include a knowledge and application assessment for students to demonstrate their knowledge before moving on to the next course.

Core Element 3 is focused on the development of accelerated and accessible career pathways and courses and the provision of wraparound student services. Future reports will detail grantees' progress toward specific outcomes, such as participant recruitment, enrollment, and program completion, through the implementation of Core Element 3-related activities. In addition to curricular and student service targets, grantees implement activities aimed at student recruitment and enrollment goals. Analysis of the interim report data showed that Norwalk made progress in meeting its Core Element 3 goal and surpassed its enrollment projections using varied, intentional approaches to student recruitment. Figure 9 depicts strategies Norwalk used to conduct student recruitment.

Figure 9

Strategies Norwalk Used to Conduct Student Recruitment



Key Challenges in Enhanced Career Pathways and Acceleration Learning Strategies

Although nine grantees reported progressing in critical metrics related to Core Element 3, common challenges arose across projects. These included difficulties with student recruitment and a lack of awareness of new program offerings (two grantees), lower-than-expected student engagement, faculty discomfort with new course formats and technologies (three grantees), challenges in faculty recruitment (four grantees), limited bandwidth to create and teach new courses (five grantees), administrative bureaucracy

for new course and curriculum approvals (three grantees), inconsistent access to support services for students (one grantee), and a lack of employer bandwidth to implement and staff new apprenticeship and WBL opportunities (one grantee).

One grant administrator stated:

> *We've had some serious staffing issues, so I'm trying to figure out how to get the staff so that I can actually run the classes now that we have the equipment. I do not only have to hire them and get them onboarded [which takes forever], I also have to get them trained.*

Key Strategies for Student Recruitment, Curriculum Development, and Social Services Provision

Five common themes arose from grantees' and evaluators' suggestions for successfully meeting metrics related to Core Element 3:

- Consider student barriers to entering the workforce.
    - Cost and academic support for certification exams may impede student progress. Grantees should consider building test preparation into academic program support and leveraging resources from industry partners for exam payment scholarships and waivers.
- Provide intensive and effective bridge support to help learners acclimate to coursework's rigors.
    - Plan student academic support intentionally and start assisting early in the learner's academic journey. Engage with evaluators early in the process to identify key success measures.
- Emphasize student engagement.
    - Provide staff support to include hands-on learning, networking opportunities, and real-life applications in coursework. Northwest State, for example, sponsored three virtual sessions in its course hybridization process for faculty and staff, and faculty received individualized weekly coaching from a content expert familiar with the SCC initiative.
- Implement faculty and student recruitment plans early.

- Use creative recruitment strategies and engage community and industry partners in recruiting new students. Figure 6 shows Norwalk's student recruitment efforts; other grantees leveraged program activities to draw interest and student participation.

- Remove technology barriers.
  - Leverage resources from institutions, industry, workforce, and community partners to address student connectivity and technology access challenges. One grantee, Broward College, described instituting a loaner laptop system, decentralizing computer labs, and coordinating with local libraries and community organizations to improve student access to technology.

As the Grand Rapids grant team recruits partner employers, it leverages partnerships to recruit students directly from employers and MichiganWorks!, its local workforce development board.

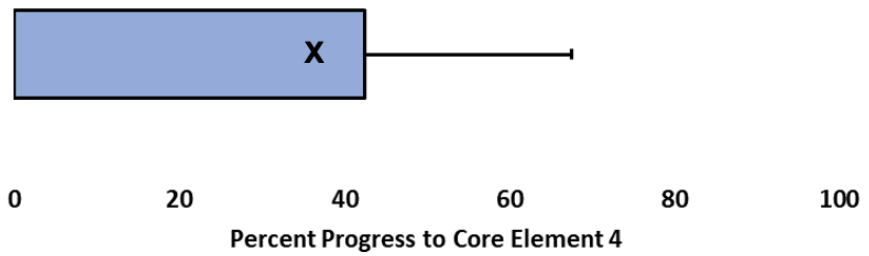
Core Element 4: Strategic Alignment With the Workforce Development System

Core Element 4 focuses on streamlining implementation and programmatic efforts across federal, state, and local programs by removing silos and minimizing duplicative efforts. More coordinated services often help workers experiencing barriers to employment overcome these challenges, gain valuable skills, and enter the workforce. Through SCC1 programs, grantees are encouraged to partner with their local workforce development boards, American Job Centers, and other workforce development system partners. According to the Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grants Funding Opportunity Announcement (U.S. DOL ETA, 2020), strategies include making referrals to SCC programs for education and training, co-enrolling participants into WIOA Title 1 programs to cover training costs, providing participant-focused support services, and ensuring that proposed programs of study are eligible for inclusion in training provider lists.

Research has suggested that academic wraparound services such as case management, advisement, and tutoring implemented with training can reduce barriers to program advancement (Pierce, 2016). Furthermore, nontraditional students may require additional support and resources such as assistance with the financial aid process, financial aid funding, food assistance, childcare, transportation, and IT equipment or internet access.

Figure 10[a]

Core Element 4: Quartile Spread[b]



[a] Sample size for Core Element 4 is N = 30.

[b] As described herein, box and whisker plots provide a 5-number summary (minimum, Q1, median/Q2, Q3, maximum) to help visualize the spread of a dataset and allow for a quick comparison of relative grantee progress toward completion of Core Element 4. The data shown display the following 5-number summary: 1) minimum (0th percentile) of 0%; Q1 (25th percentile) of 0%; median/Q2 (50th percentile) of 0%; Q3 (75th percentile) of 42.5%; and maximum (100th percentile) of 67.5%. Additionally, the X represents the mean value of progress toward Core Element 4, which is 23.8% across grantee institutions.

Although nine of 11 grantees reported some progress metrics in planning and implementing program elements to align strategically with workforce development, QNR data analysis showed limited progress in achieving their overall targets for Core Element 4. Further, data analysis showed a median of 0% (50th percentile) completion toward target progression, whereas the mean completion percentage was 23.8% toward target outcomes (Figure 10). For instance, consider a dataset in which the completion percentages are 0%, 0%, 0%, 0%, and 100%, respectively, toward target progression. In this case, the median value would be 0%, whereas the mean value would be 20%, similar to that of the study team's dataset for Core Element 4. This suggests that

grantees experienced some degree of success in achieving certain desired metrics but still showed limited progress toward overall goals.

1. Grantees are strengthening secondary and postsecondary career and technical education partnerships to improve K-12 pipelines.

In addition to targeting WIOA participants, two grantees worked to strengthen program alignment by coordinating engagement and recruitment opportunities for secondary students. Strategies for creating a high school-to-community college pipeline include hosting campus events, providing campus tours, and allowing students to use lab equipment. For example, one of the Forsyth Technical consortium institutional partners hosted its first Campus Apprenticeship Day with 200 high school students attending. By the second year of the grant, three Forsyth Technical institutional partners were operating summer pre-apprenticeship programs to spur recruitment.

In addition to its recruitment efforts with local high school students, Grand Rapids Community College is working to cultivate a relationship with the Grand Rapids African American Health Institute (GRAAHI) to aid recruitment. Part of that work included hosting a campus visit for GRAAHI high school students in which they learned about credit- and noncredit-bearing programs, toured simulation labs, and participated in hands-on learning activities. Oakland Community College (a member of the Grand Rapids consortium) brought 80 secondary students to campus for site tours and opportunities to learn about healthcare career pathways.

2. Grantees coordinate with other resource partners to streamline referrals for student services.

To align program systems, three grantees reported implementing or preparing to implement activities to streamline and expand support services for students. This work

includes aligning with efforts like federal- and state-level initiatives such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T). Norwalk exceeded its enrollment targets for years 1–2 of the grant; its target was to enroll 50 SNAP E&T-eligible participants. However, according to the interim report, it ultimately enrolled 266 SCC participants who received SNAP E&T benefits by the end of the second year. Norwalk also aimed to increase the number of students receiving individual training accounts (ITAs) to 125 program participants by the end of the second year and exceeded this target by three students, with 128 participants receiving ITAs. It attributed this success to an approach whereby each consortium institution worked with SNAP E&T and workforce development boards to develop streamlined referral processes and to place courses on the workforce development boards' qualified course lists. Being approved for this list would ensure that students could use their ITA funding for enrollment.

For American River, one key strategy for aligning support systems was streamlining referrals for support services during initial enrollment, coursework and completion, and student transition into the workplace. By the end of the second year of the grant, American River had completed an assessment of current student referral processes, provided baseline findings and recommendations for how referral processes could be improved, and developed strategies to better coordinate its student support services based on this monitoring process.

Case Study: Core Element 4 – Forsyth Technical College

The **Forsyth Technical** Consortium has already exceeded two targets related to strategic alignment: the number of candidates enrolled via the WIOA and the number of entities providing holistic support for students and trainees. Forsyth aimed for a 10% increase in WIOA-enrolled candidates in machining, mechatronics, welding, and related programs, with an overall target of 74 WIOA-enrolled students over four years. However, as reported by its TPE, the program has already enrolled 63 students co-enrolled in WIOA across its eight institutions with more than one year left in the grant period.

To provide resources and guide WIOA-enrolled students early in their enrollment, the consortium assigned an intake and success coach to each student. These success coaches can refer them to holistic services that support program completion, screen

students for social services eligibility, refer them to relevant partner community agencies, and provide academic, social, and basic assistance, such as tutoring, emergency financial support, food, and clothing. They also work with local food banks and shelters to ensure WIOA-enrolled students have streamlined access to these resources.

Further, the grant team sought to expand the number of entities providing academic and nonacademic support from 0 to 25 over four years. In the first two years of its SCC grant-funded initiative, 184 public and private entities provided these services in collaboration with consortium institutions.

Lessons Learned for Strategic Alignment With the Workforce Development System

Four grantees reported progress on this Core Element in their QNRs. Based on their findings, the study team offered one recommendation for how this area can be strengthened:

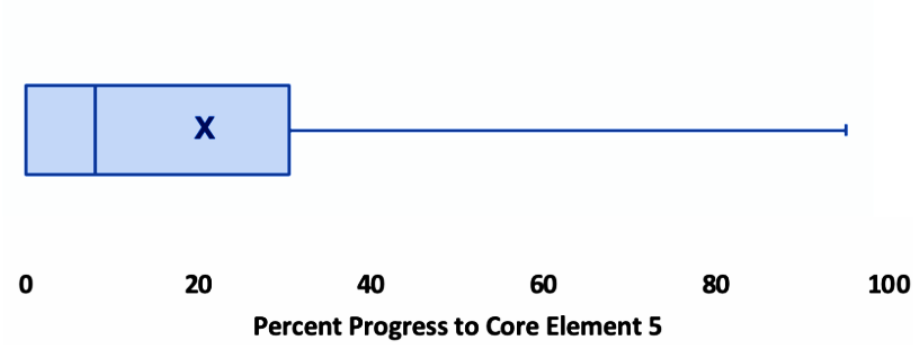
- Leverage partnerships with partner organizations such as American Job Centers to spread awareness of available resources. Ensure that students, community partners, and industry partners know about opportunities and services available to participants. Consistently engage community partners to share course and program offering updates with the broader community.

Core Element 5: Systems Change Efforts

Core Element 5 focuses on systems change efforts and applies only to consortium grantees. Systems change targets could focus on accelerated learning pathways or statewide data integration and use. All consortium grantees elected to focus on accelerated learning pathways and so did not include a discussion of statewide data integration and use in their project designs.

Figure 11[a]

Core Element 5: Quartile Spread[b]



[a] Sample size for Core Element 5 is N = 16.

[b] As described herein, box and whisker plots provide a 5-number summary (minimum, Q1, median/Q2, Q3, maximum) to help visualize the spread of a dataset and allow for a quick comparison of relative grantee progress toward completion of Core Element 5. The data shown display the following 5-number summary: 1) minimum (0th percentile) of 0%; Q1 (25th percentile) of 0%; median/Q2 (50th percentile) of 8%; Q3 (75th percentile) of 30.5%; and maximum (100th percentile) of 95%. Additionally, the X represents the mean value of progress toward Core Element 5, which is 21.8% across grantee institutions.

Core Element 5 focused on consortia grantees, each of whom could focus on either accelerated learning pathways or statewide data integration and use. As stated previously, only consortia grantees were required to address this core element; therefore, single-institution grantees do not have the required outcomes for Core Element 5. All consortia grantees elected to create outcomes related to accelerated learning pathways. Thus, this analysis does not report on statewide data integration and use in project designs. Five of the seven consortia grantees reported progressing toward targets related to systems change efforts, with a median progression of 8% toward target gains and a mean progression of 21.8% toward Core Element 5 targets (Figure 11). This discrepancy between median (50th percentile) and mean (average) can be explained by the following example percentages: 0%, 0%, 8%, 50%, and 50%. Grantee progress toward Core Element 5 with these percentages would give rise to a median of 8% and a mean of 21.6%, similar to grantee QNR data, which again suggests limited overall success toward Core Element 5 at this stage. Based on qualitative analysis of the interim reports, factors supporting successful systems change across

multiple grantees included implementing innovative recruitment strategies, developing high institutional support, building buy-in from internal and external partners, conducting gap analysis and solution development, and ensuring robust and effective communication between colleges and employers.

The study team anticipates that QNRs for Q9–Q16 and final grantee reports will provide more detailed insights into consortium grantees' system change efforts and resulting outcomes. The following section outlines grantees' progress toward meeting targets related to accelerated learning pathways and concludes with a case study and lessons learned.

Consortium grantees are providing students with accelerated learning pathways.

Mt. Hood aims to increase the number of students completing a program with two or more credentials embedded in the program's pathway, setting a target of 260 additional students in advanced manufacturing and 42 other students in cybersecurity. By the end of the second year, Mt. Hood had 123 additional students completing two or more credentials in advanced manufacturing and 11 in cybersecurity. Survey data from program faculty indicate that hybrid and online course offerings have increased access for students who might otherwise be hindered from entering or completing programs because of transportation, cost, and scheduling challenges.

Forsyth Technical sought to increase the number of participants obtaining credit for prior learning in the first two years of the grant. To that end, it completed a review of consortium institutions' previous learning assessment policies and collected course exams to develop a prior learning assessment repository. It developed and administered two assessments to students at one consortium institution during the program's second year; their adoption for the whole consortium will be voted on once the related courses have been finalized. The grantees also explored an electronic document management system to track credit for prior learning processes. By the end of the second year, 26 students had earned 122 college credits for prior learning.

Norwalk aimed to strengthen noncredit-to-credit career pathways and promote pathways and opportunities for stackable credentials. As of this writing, it has met its

target of creating an instructional video that offers an overview of the sterile processing technician role and available scholarship resources. It has already exceeded its grant target of 400 students participating in career pathway education and training programs with over 1,100 completers.

Case Study: Core Element 5 – Savannah Technical Consortium

Since the inception of its SCC grant initiative, the **Savannah Technical** consortium has expanded from 12 institutions to 17, though it was expected to include all 22 technical colleges in the Technical College System of Georgia by the end of 2023. This grantee elected to use a largely decentralized structure, with each consortium institution primarily engaging economic development and industry partners directly instead of at the consortium level. However, it remains committed to its systems-level approach, evidenced by eight key project developments over the first two years of the grant. These included the following:

- Adopting its pathway and digital microcredentialing[18] platform and process as one of the system's strategic priorities;
- Adding microcredentials to the system-wide policy manual as a formal program category;
- Developing and adopting a system-wide manual to standardize the development and approval of credentials, pathways, and badges;
- Implementing a consortium-wide system to issue and track badges;
- Integrating new and preexisting data management systems for tracking and issuing badges across the consortium;
- Convening a summit to establish a numbering and naming convention for noncredit courses, categories for course organization, a master template for course descriptions, and a process for new course development;
- Developing a standard MOU template for engaging industry partners, developing apprenticeships, and incorporating microcredentials into adult-education-integrated education training and bridge programs; and
- Expanding the microcredentialing system and related pathways to the state's secondary schools.

[18] GA CATO will create a branded system of skills-based microcredentials with stackable learning pathways and portable learner records.

The findings presented by the five grantees reporting progress in this core element led to three key takeaways:

- Prepare for program and institutional staff turnover.
    - Create and maintain standard operating procedures for continuity after grant and program staff turnover.
- Mitigate complexity with phased implementation.
    - Consortium projects are often complex and involve multiple institutions and processes. Consider streamlining or staggering planning and implementation where possible.
- Plan for institutional processes.
    - Consortia institutions may operate with varied resources, materials, and processes. Grant teams should communicate frequently and leverage partnerships to sustain program momentum. Pause plans when necessary to allow time to build out foundational infrastructure.

Summary of Lessons Learned

SCC1 interim reports revealed not only the grantees' progression toward their implementation goals but also highlighted promising practices, practical strategies, and conditions supporting this progression. Likewise, when available, the findings underscored grantees' barriers and challenges in meeting their intended implementation and outcome targets. From these findings, the study team identified a set of lessons learned that can be applied when implementing similar future initiatives, including current SCC grantees (Rounds 2 and 3) and Round 4, expected in the spring of 2024.

Lessons learned for future grantees comprise three areas discussed as follows.

Early Implementation and Adoption of Cohesive Data Collection and Monitoring Mechanisms

- Early implementation of tracking systems for student enrollment and completion can provide real-time progress insights.

- Immediate data collection strategies from pivotal stakeholders can boost program accuracy and feedback.
- Ensuring consistency in support or a point of contact for evaluators, even amid programmatic turnover, can strengthen data collection processes.

Development of Strategic, Frequent Communication Touchpoints for Stakeholders

- Direct feedback from employers and workforce agencies can be instrumental in refining curricula and developing more efficient career pathways.
- A centralized hub (e.g., website, shared online folder) for all project-related data and materials is crucial to clear and effective communication.

Importance of Ensuring Consortia Program Leaders Fully Understand Their Institutions' Needs, Interests, Barriers, and Limitations

- Consistent buy-in, or willingness to actively support and participate in SCC1 initiatives across consortium institutions, can eliminate potential roadblocks and create a unified vision.

Conclusion

The study team's review of the SCC Round 1 Interim Evaluation Reports and March 2023 QNRs highlights program successes and opportunities for improvement in subsequent rounds across the four Core Elements. Diversity among funded programs' customized outcomes, grantee sites and locations, and types of partnerships proved challenging for conducting an overarching systematic review of program success, as did disparities in the quality and content of programs' interim reports. However, the analysis provided opportunities to recognize grantees' implementation progress and highlight their effective use of resources, their vibrant partnerships and collaborations, and their increased access to pathways for student success.

The study team's review of the interim reports found that grantees are progressing toward their intended implementation and outcome targets, albeit at different rates of time and success. This analysis also highlighted successful implementations, program-

related strategies and activities, and program implementation challenges while sharing solutions within and across program elements and pathways.

Grantees are engaging employers and workforce development partners across a spectrum of involvement, from advisory to hands-on to strategic. One approach is providing employer and workforce development board partners multiple avenues through which to engage in grantee activities while encouraging partners to move toward strategic partnerships and helping at least Northwest State to forge new partnerships. Given the DOL's emphasis on moving toward strategic engagement, more grantees may want to consider explicit targets for the number of partners moving from advisory to strategic. In addition, consortium grantees may want to consider setting up standard tracking systems to help them accurately track the level of partner engagement with each consortium institution as well as the number of partners engaging at the advisory, hands-on, and strategic levels.

Accelerated learning continues to be an area of emphasis for grantees, and many are working diligently to develop new programs and courses and to get institutional approval for enrolling students. Intentional student recruitment plans are key to successful student enrollment, and grantees would be well served to think about and plan for student recruitment early in the grant period. Norwalk is an exemplary grantee leveraging internal and external resources to recruit students and is ahead of schedule in meeting its enrollment targets.

Lessons learned from SCC1 grantees present valuable operational insights that will help subsequent rounds of SCC grantees learn from those in earlier rounds. SCC1 grantees consistently note employer partnerships and transparent communications as gateways to program success.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Interim Report Template and Guidelines

Section Overview	Checklist for Fully Addressing Sections
Cover Page and Table of Contents	
The report should have a separate cover page that notes the grantee, project title, report type, date, and third-party evaluator. Following the cover page, the report should include a Table of Contents with all major sections noted with corresponding page numbers. All sections should have embedded hyperlinks to the body of the report for easier navigation (both for PDF and Word Documents). Any additional information, such as funding source, acknowledgements, etc., can be added prior to the Table of Contents. Draft submissions should be sent in a Word Document. Final report submissions should be in a PDF format.	✔ Cover Page should include the following: • Title of the report • Grantee/project name • Evaluator/Author information • Date of submission ✔ Final submission of the report should be in PDF format ✔ Any appropriate additional information should have its own page following the Cover Page, including funding source, acknowledgements, etc. ✔ A linkable Table of Contents with all the major headings and subheadings should follow the Cover Page ✔ Authors are encouraged to personalize their reports by incorporating their organizations' standard report themes, colors, formats, and/or logos.
Section Overview	**Checklist for Fully Addressing Sections**
Executive Summary	
The report should open with a high-level summary of the report's contents. The purpose of the Executive Summary is to briefly introduce the SCC program (i.e., the evaluand) and its context, the approach and purpose of the evaluation, the types of data collected, and major findings and take-aways. The Executive Summary should be written in such a way as to act as a stand- alone document. Readers should be able to easily identify the project, grantee, participants, purpose, and high-level take-aways from this section.	✔ Executive Summary should be no longer than 5 pages ✔ The summary should include the following information: • Name of the grantee, project, and participating sites (if applicable) • Brief explanation of the project goals and activities • Brief summary of the approach and goals of the evaluation • Brief summary of the study participants, data collection methods, data sources, and analyses • High-level findings and/or major take-aways from the report narrative ✔ Formatting should reflect a stand-alone document ✔ The section should be simple to read and easy to identify the major points from the narrative ✔ Clear headings, bulleted lists, and short tables could enhance readability
Section Overview	**Checklist for Fully Addressing Sections**
Introduction and Background	
The first section of the Interim Report is an *Introduction* followed by a *Background* section. The *Introduction* should provide a summary explanation of the purpose and scope of the evaluation, as well as high-level research questions. This section should also introduce the third-party evaluator(s) conducting the study. This section should align to the broad components of the submitted Evaluation Plan. The *Background* subsection provides context for the SCC program, or the evaluand, for the reader. This section should include a high-level introduction and description of the participating institutions, the rationale for the program, the purpose and/or goals of the program, and the broad activities the program is implementing. The conclusion of this section should set expectations for the remainder of the report contents. It should state the organization, scope, and contents for the report, as well as limitations or notes of interest readers may need to know.	✔ An opening statement, with brief SCC program information and name of the evaluand program and introduction to third-party evaluator(s) ✔ High-level summary of the evaluation's purpose, approach, and design ✔ Includes broad or overarching research questions that the report will address ✔ High-level summary of evaluation activities and data collection at the point of submission ✔ Briefly describes the SCC program, including the name and location of participating institutions, target sample population, program partners (e.g., employers, etc.), goals, and major activities ✔ Briefly explains the contents and organization for the rest of the report, including any limitations or important context required

Section Overview	Checklist for Fully Addressing Section
Program Overview	
The purpose of this section is to delve deeper into the structure, organization, activities, and/or implementation of the SCC program. This section may include more in-depth information for the study sites/institutions, including program roles, timeline of implementation, staffing, management of the initiative, and/or the roll-out process. For consortium grantees, this section should provide organizational and implementation information at a consortium level as well as the institutional level, if appropriate. This section may also provide challenges, limitations, or noted changes to the initial implementation timeline and potential reasons for those changes. Also include in this section a brief explanation or visual of the theory of change and/or logic model for the program as reference. This could also be in an Appendix to save space, if needed, but should be referred to in the narrative.	✔ Include the organization and/or structure of the SCC program, including important roles ✔ Describe the implementation roll-out process or any critical implementation information related to timeline and activities ✔ Consortium grantees should include consortium-level and institutional-level information, where appropriate ✔ Reference the theory of change and/or program logic model when describing the intended/actual activities; the graphic can appear in an appendix, if desired ✔ Note any deviations from the intended implementation activities and/or timeline
Section Overview	**Checklist for Fully Addressing Section**
Summary of Activities & Outputs	
The purpose of this section is to illustrate the program's progress to date related to its activities and COR metrics, as well as the logic model outputs. The Core Elements of the program should include: • Employer Engagement • Career Pathways Programs/Accelerated Learning Strategies • Alignment to Workforce Development System • Systems Change (Consortia grantees)- Accelerated Learning Pathways The section should reflect the program's progress and status of the SCC Performance Outcome Area customized outcomes. This may include changes in outputs, such as number of engaged sector employees, number of stackable credentials developed, and enrollment of students, for example. Other elements may include outputs reflected in the logic model for which data is available and where appropriate. Tables and/or graphs reflecting both numbers and/or descriptions and illustrative examples would be appropriate and foster readability. This section is not intended to share in-depth findings, but rather to report on changes in activities and outputs.	✔ Describe or report the extent to which the SCC program's proposed outputs have changed ✔ Includes information on the grantee's customized outcomes developed with DOL ✔ Describes any progress to date in narrative format for indicators or outputs that require deeper explanation ✔ Organizational displays, such as tables and graphs, can be used to share output data, where appropriate

Section Overview	Checklist for Fully Addressing Section
Findings	
The organization of the *Findings* section is at the discretion of the author(s) and their grantees. The section should provide greater insight into the themes, results, and/or highlights derived from the evaluation activities. This section could be organized according to the research questions, the components or Core Elements of the grant program, within and across sites/consortium, a combination of these, or in another format consistent with the evaluators' purpose and grantees' interests. This section should have clear subheadings for easy navigation and comprehension and should align to the purpose of the evaluation and its overall questions as stated in the Evaluation Plan. Where possible, this section should highlight promising implementation and program practices, as well as challenges/barriers. These highlights can either be embedded across the narrative or under its own subsection.	✔ Section organization and contents should reflect the purpose and questions of the evaluation as well as the interests and needs of the grantee ✔ Formatting the presentation of findings is at the discretion of the evaluator and may be organized by: • Research question • Core Element/Component • Thematically • Combination or Other Format ✔ Include Promising Practices and Challenges/Barriers where appropriate ✔ Incorporate clear subheadings highlighting the organization and findings
Section Overview	**Checklist for Fully Addressing Section**
Recommendations/Conclusion	
The following sections should follow the *Findings* at the discretion of the author(s) and their grantees. A *Recommendations (*optional) section should highlight potential lessons learned and next steps for the remainder of the program's grant lifecycle. Such recommendations should serve the grantee and are based on the findings from the evaluation and needs of the program. The recommendations could also be directed towards future SCC programming and grant-making processes. A *Conclusion* section serves as a high-level summary of the previous sections, including the activities, outputs, and findings, as well as potential implications and limitations. The section should mirror the information found in the *Executive Summary* and note the next steps for the evaluation and the program. The final subsection of the report should include *Limitations*. This subsection should note any areas of concern that may have hindered or influenced the evaluation activities, data collection, analyses, and/or findings. This section should also note any deviations from or challenges with the Evaluation Plan with rationale, where appropriate. The *Limitations* will provide the reader with caution in interpreting findings, where necessary	✔ The author(s) and grantees may opt to include a *Recommendations* section, or similar section, but it is not required ✔ Include a high-level summary of the previous sections and should reflect the major takeaways in the *Executive Summary* ✔ Provide study limitations including: • Deviations from program implementation • Deviations from the Evaluation Plan • Challenges or concerns with sample, data collection, analyses, and/or interpretations ✔ Detail next steps for both the program and the evaluation, including what to expect in the Final Report

Section Overview	Checklist for Fully Addressing Section
Appendices	
To ensure completeness of the report, as well as conciseness of the narrative, each Interim Report should include the following appendices: *Appendix A: Detailed Evaluation Methodology* Evaluation Methodology should provide a detailed explanation of the evaluation's purpose, approach, type, research questions, design, and activities since its beginning. The methodology should also include the sampling structure(s) used, data sources, data collection activities and strategies, and data analysis procedures. It should also include a more detailed limitations section than found in the Conclusion. Much of the information should reflect what was submitted in the Evaluation Plan or provide a rationale for any deviations. *Appendix B: Theory of Change or Logic Model* Note any changes made to the Theory of Change/Logic Model from it's original submission. *Appendix C: Focus Group and Interview Guides* This appendix should include at least one example of a focus group and/or interview guide or protocol if such data was collected for the interim report. *Appendix D: Surveys, Checklists, Rubrics* This appendix should include any additional data collection instruments used within the scope of the interim report, including surveys, observation checklists, rubrics, etc. Other Appendices as appropriate	✔ Provide detailed evaluation methodology including: • Evaluation purpose • Evaluation type/approach • Evaluation design • Research questions • Evaluation activities completed to-date • Sampling strategy & number of participants • Data collection and data sources • Analysis strategies/procedures • Limitations ✔ Include examples of any data collection instruments including: • Focus group/interview guides and protocols • Surveys • Checklists • Rubrics

Appendix B. Customized Outcomes by Grantee

American River College

SCC PERFORMANCE OUTCOME AREA	GRANTEE CUSTOMIZED OUTCOME
2a. Increase in breadth/depth of employer engagement and investment in educational/training programs.	Outcome 2a: Establishment of a new, organized cluster and regional advisory board for business services in the public sector, leads to more strategic engagement of employers and a mechanism for developing responsive curriculum.
2b. Increase in sector employers making commitments to better support WBL opportunities and/or employment, retention, and advancement of CP participants.	Outcome 2b: Growth in the number of public sector employers committed to trialing and integrating new methods and platforms into current public sector recruitment methods.
3a. Design or implementation of new, accelerated instructional techniques/technologies, including use of advanced online and technology-enabled learning	Outcome 3a: Growth to 4 simultaneously enrolled cohorts in ACE model for BIW degree program delivery; improves time to completion and number of awards.
3b. Measure of restructuring or alignment of educational/training programs based on local or regional labor market data.	Outcome 3b: 3 new BIW awards that embed industry recognized Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) certifications reflective of the skill sets required by public sector employers.
4a. Increase in program and policy alignment across systems and/or decrease in duplicative services or service gaps.	Outcome 4a: Introduction of 3 new student-centered processes (referrals, placement, and reporting) developed with SETA (WIOA partner); facilitate

SCC PERFORMANCE OUTCOME AREA	GRANTEE CUSTOMIZED OUTCOME
	increased integration of people with employment barriers into BIW training and placement in public sector careers.
4b. Development of new and/or expanded partnerships among key stakeholders resulting in streamlined or expanded services for participants	Outcome 4b: New partnerships with Capital Adult Education Regional Consortium (CAERC) and Institute for Local Government (ILG) lead to streamlined pathways and increased opportunities for adult learners to access the public sector career pathway.
5a. Measure of removing significant systemic barriers among CP participants.	Outcome 5a: Integration of ACE model into BIW programs ensures easier access to courses and dedicated resources, leading to stronger rates of retention and completion.
5b. Increase in linkages developed throughout CP to encompass bridge programs, CTE programs, and WBL	Outcome 5b: Increased exposure to public sector careers through work-based learning opportunities within the BIW pathway, supports program enrollment and retention.

Broward College

SCC PERFORMANCE OUTCOME AREA	GRANTEE CUSTOMIZED OUTCOME
2a. Increase in breadth/depth of employer engagement and investment in educational/training programs.	(1) Increase employer engagement from two to nine through Industry Validation Advisory Committees membership Timeframe: Year 1: One added employer (3) Year 2: Two added employers (5) Year 3: Two added employers (7) Year 4: Two added employers (9)
2a. Increase in breadth/depth of employer engagement and investment in educational/training programs.	(2) Increase employers who provide work-based experiences that include pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, OJT, employer partner work-based learning and/or experiences related to training and employment outcomes to non-credit students within the targeted sectors from 8 to 13. Timeframe: Year 1: One added employer (9) Year 2: One added employers (10) Year 3: One added employer (11) Year 4: Two added employers (13)

SCC PERFORMANCE OUTCOME AREA	GRANTEE CUSTOMIZED OUTCOME
3a. Design or implementation of new, accelerated instructional techniques/technologies, including use of advanced online and technology-enabled learning	(1) Increase workforce education completers who receive/pass industry certifications from 28% to 33%. Timeframe: Year 1: 0 to 13 completers Year 2: 13 to 145 completers (132) Year 3: 145 to 277 completers (132) Year 4: 277 to 409 completers (132)
3a. Design or implementation of new, accelerated instructional techniques/technologies, including use of advanced online and technology-enabled learning	(2) Decrease time to associate degree from 3.3 years to 2.7 years. Timeframe: Year 1: 3.3 to 3.2 years Year 2: 3.2 to 3.0 years Year 3: 3.0 to 2.8 years Year 4: 2.8 to 2.7 years
3a. Design or implementation of new, accelerated instructional techniques/technologies, including use of advanced online and technology-enabled learning	(3) Increase participants that matriculate and complete a degree from 10% to 15% Timeframe: Year 1: 6 completers Year 2: 60 add'l completers (66) Year 3: 60 add'l completers (126) Year 4: 60 add'l completers (186)

SCC PERFORMANCE OUTCOME AREA	GRANTEE CUSTOMIZED OUTCOME
4a. Increase in program and policy alignment across systems and/or decrease in duplicative services or service gaps.	(1) Increased job placement rates of WIOA-eligible participants and unemployed or displaced workers from 23% to 28% Timeframe: Year 1: 10 participants, Year 2: 14 add'l participants (24) Year 3: 14 add'l participants (38) Year 4: 14 add'l participants (52)
4a. Increase in program and policy alignment across systems and/or decrease in duplicative services or service gaps.	(2) Increase training completers who retain or advance their position within the industry from 53% to 63%. Timeframe: Year 1: 26 completers, Year 2: 254 add'l completers (280) Year 3: 254 add'l completers by (534) Year 4: 254 add'l (788)

Forsyth Technical Community College

SCC PERFORMANCE OUTCOME AREA	GRANTEE CUSTOMIZED OUTCOME
2a. Increase in breadth/depth of employer engagement and investment in educational/training programs.	(1) Increase the number of employers in the region that are active in the BILT for advanced manufacturing. Active will be defined as a BILT-member company that attends at least 60% of scheduled meetings in any 12-month period and submits KSA input that reflects its organization's needs.
2b. Increase in sector employers making commitments to better support WBL opportunities and/or employment, retention, and advancement of CP participants.	(1) Increase the number of sector employers incorporating digital badging in job descriptions as a preference in employee recruitment and hiring. This will be measured by employers recognizing at least 1 (one) digital badge based on the KSA's applicants need for that job.
3a. Design or implementation of new, accelerated instructional techniques/technologies, including use of advanced online and technology-enabled learning	(1) Increase the number of community colleges jointly enrolling students into synchronous and asynchronous courses with flexible scheduling for adult workers and others to complete technical instruction remotely and hands-on activities locally.
3b. Measure of restructuring or alignment of educational/training programs based on local or regional labor market data.	(1) Introduce digital badging that maps to BILT-defined KSA's that reflect what employers need students to acquire from machining, mechatronics/industrial systems technology, and welding programs in order to be good candidates for jobs.

SCC PERFORMANCE OUTCOME AREA	GRANTEE CUSTOMIZED OUTCOME
	The goal is creating 70 distinct badges based on KSAs as defined by BILT-member employer partners.
4a. Increase in program and policy alignment across systems and/or decrease in duplicative services or service gaps.	(1) Achieve year-over-year percentage increases in the number of WIOA-enrollment candidates in machining, mechatronics, welding, or related programs of study enhanced through the project, Year 1: 16 Year 2: 17.6 = 16 * 1.1 (10% increase) Year 3: 19.36 = 17.6 * 1.1 (10% increase) Year 4: 21.296 = 19.35 * 1.1 (10% increase) Cumulative total: 74
4b. Development of new and/or expanded partnerships among key stakeholders resulting in streamlined or expanded services for participants	(1) Increase the number of public and private entities from zero to 25 (twenty-five) in the regional education-workforce ecosystem that provide holistic support for students and trainees along the certified career pathway for advanced manufacturing. Holistic support includes academic support, such as advising and tutoring, and non-academic support, such as help removing transportation, childcare, and food insecurity as barriers to success.
5a. Measure of removing significant systemic barriers among CP participants.	(1) Achieve year over year increases in the number of participants who attain college credit for prior learning and/or the number awarded industry recognized credentials, or postsecondary certificates, diplomas, or associate degrees.

SCC PERFORMANCE OUTCOME AREA	GRANTEE CUSTOMIZED OUTCOME
5b. Increase in linkages developed throughout CP to encompass bridge programs, CTE programs, and WBL	(1) Increases the use of digital badges to align the education-workforce system and provide links for job seekers and incumbent workers who can move seamlessly at their own pace along regional career pathways in manufacturing. The goal is to issue 1150 individual badges to students of the pool of badges created (70) based on the KSAs determined by the industry BILT partners.
5b. Increase in linkages developed throughout CP to encompass bridge programs, CTE programs, and WBL	(2) Creation of a pool of badges (70) based on the KSAs determined by the industry BILT partners.

Grand Rapids Community College

SCC PERFORMANCE OUTCOME AREA	GRANTEE CUSTOMIZED OUTCOME
2a. Increase in breadth/depth of employer engagement and investment in educational and training programs.	Growth from 20 to 45 sector employer partners that meet criteria for engagement and serve as full strategic partners to the college, taking on a leadership role for multi-employer/multi-college partnerships.
2b. Increase in sector employers making commitments to better support WBL opportunities and/or employment, retention, and advancement of CP participants.	Increase from 2 to 10 the number of employers that improve practices to fully support the career pathways vision & desired outcomes, while increasing understanding of work-based learning models to grow the number of opportunities.
2b. Increase in sector employers making commitments to better support WBL opportunities and/or employment, retention, and advancement of CP participants.	(1) Offer work-based learning experiences at their sites (job shadows, tours, internships).
2b. Increase in sector employers making commitments to better support WBL opportunities and/or employment, retention, and advancement of CP participants.	(2) Apprenticeships offered.
2b. Increase in sector employers making commitments to better support WBL opportunities and/or employment, retention, and advancement of CP participants.	(3) Create pathways for advancement, share with WIB & Colleges for their organization

SCC PERFORMANCE OUTCOME AREA	GRANTEE CUSTOMIZED OUTCOME
3a. Design or implementation of new, accelerated instructional techniques/technologies, including use of advanced online and technology-enabled learning	In the health care career pathway increase by 50% the number of programs with fully developed & implemented hybrid learning methods on the Michigan Colleges Online (MCO) platform to enable participants to attain a credential while working.
3b. Measure of restructuring or alignment of educational/training programs based on local or regional labor market data.	Deploy a validation system wherein industry and workforce development system partners are engaged to provide ready access to labor market data used to drive new health care programs.
3b. Measure of restructuring or alignment of educational/training programs based on local or regional labor market data.	(1) Create employer validation system/structure for regional from BLS labor data. (System will include validation for in-demand jobs; jobs with high demand but low hiring numbers; wage rates) -System will exist at one school/WIB by end of year 2; -end of year 3 at 3 schools/2 WIBS (one WIB covers 2 schools); -end of year 4 all schools/WIBS will fully use system,
3b. Measure of restructuring or alignment of educational/training programs based on local or regional labor market data.	(2) Create employer feedback on program graduates with feedback for changes.
3b. Measure of restructuring or alignment of educational/training programs based on local or regional labor market data.	(3) Create public materials on program, labor data and tie to education/ training programs for consumers decision making.

SCC PERFORMANCE OUTCOME AREA	GRANTEE CUSTOMIZED OUTCOME
4a. Increase in program and policy alignment across systems and/or decrease in duplicative services or service gaps.	Expanded partnership between colleges and their respective Michigan Works! agencies will result in the creation of a mutual intake system with shared assessments and common program entry requirements that ensure streamlined services for participants to assess, enter, and complete health care programs enhanced or created by this project. Partnership details: 1-Common paperwork for participants (3 colleges with WIB partners) 2-Incorporating feedback from non-profit partners to ensure equity & inclusion for all participants into paperwork system. 3-Understanding of assessments and collaboration on health care assessments based on employer need/desire. (3 colleges with WIB partners) 4-Visual pathways will outline program entry requirements 5-Michigan Works agencies and Colleges will establish a baseline in year 1 for online health program enrollments and will by the end of year 4 have increased the number of participants in those programs by 20%.

SCC PERFORMANCE OUTCOME AREA	GRANTEE CUSTOMIZED OUTCOME
4b. Development of new and/or expanded partnerships among key stakeholders resulting in streamlined or expanded services for participants	Increase access to resources (e.g., wraparound supports, leveraged training funds) to reduce barriers for participants who are entering education/ training by creating a network among key partners (MI Works! case managers, non-profit partners, college coaches) to clarify available resources and process for accessing them.
4b. Development of new and/or expanded partnerships among key stakeholders resulting in streamlined or expanded services for participants	(1) Year 1 meeting of Michigan Works and college coaching, case management staff to discuss barriers and connection for participants. Creation of survey or additions to intake process to find out barrier needs. Use that data as a baseline.
4b. Development of new and/or expanded partnerships among key stakeholders resulting in streamlined or expanded services for participants	(2) Year 2 Build local connections in 3 of 5 regions to connect participants to additional services (i.e., Non-profit partners, services: - addiction recovery, mental health needs, housing, food, etc.).
4b. Development of new and/or expanded partnerships among key stakeholders resulting in streamlined or expanded services for participants	(3) Year 3 Visual handouts (brochures/cards?) to assist participants and connect them to additional resources. Explore bringing resources into One Stop centers and/or school locations. Work with Employer Resource Networks to include them in barrier reduction work

SCC PERFORMANCE OUTCOME AREA	GRANTEE CUSTOMIZED OUTCOME
4b. Development of new and/or expanded partnerships among key stakeholders resulting in streamlined or expanded services for participants	(4) Year 4 survey participants on outreach activities related to barriers to see if there has been an improvement to service connection.
5a. Measure of removing significant systemic barriers among CP participants.	Growth from 0 to 6 in the number of health care programs that can be articulated among coalition colleges.
5b. Increase in linkages developed throughout CP to encompass bridge programs, CTE programs, and WBL	Increase to 4 the number of high school career & technical education centers that offer health care CTE programs that articulate to credit towards a community college program. Bridge programs will be included in college course catalogs for non-credit to credit programs. Bridge programs will depend on the programming offered at each county school district sites. Examples: pharmacy technician, certified nursing assistant, general health, health administration,

Long Beach City

SCC PERFORMANCE OUTCOME AREA	GRANTEE CUSTOMIZED OUTCOME
2a. Increase in breadth/depth of employer engagement and investment in educational/training programs.	Increase from 0 to 11 the number of industry partners who provide leadership by sitting on an industry advisory board, offer work-based learning opportunities, identify skill sets needed in local workforce, and other engagement activities.
3a. Design or implementation of new, accelerated instructional techniques/technologies, including use of advanced online and technology-enabled learning.	Three new noncredit, credit, or not-for-credit certificates in supply chain and logistics which integrate digital skills including digital competency, Microsoft certifications, and industry endorsed digital skills to be determined by the industry advisory members. The certificates will align with specific occupations.
4a. Increase in program and policy alignment across systems and/or decrease in duplicative services or service gaps.	One hundred percent100% of local WIBs will be integrated into LBCC's resources to align business processes and increase the identification and enrollment of WIOA-enrolled participants at the College.

Mt. Hood Community College

SCC PERFORMANCE OUTCOME AREA	GRANTEE CUSTOMIZED OUTCOME
2a. Increase in breadth/depth of employer engagement and investment in educational/training programs.	Outcome 2a - **Advanced Manufacturing**: Growth in the number of sector employer partners that progress from "advisor" towards full "strategic partners."
2a. Increase in breadth/depth of employer engagement and investment in educational/training programs.	Outcome 2a - **Cybersecurity**: Growth in the number of sector employer partners that progress from "advisor" towards full "strategic partners."
2b. Increase in sector employers making commitments to better support WBL opportunities and/or employment, retention, and advancement of CP participants.	Outcome 2b - **Advanced Manufacturing**: Growth in the number of sector employers committing to bettering work-based learning (WBL) opportunities, which includes one or more of the following: provide WBL for consortium students, interview/hire program completers, or advance incumbent workers in salary/title, upon credential completion. Baseline number reflects existing employers consortium-wide who already have demonstrated this commitment either through past practice or a letter (on file). The target number will be measured by the number of additional letters of commitment to increasing WBL opportunities by sector employers consortium-wide.

SCC PERFORMANCE OUTCOME AREA	GRANTEE CUSTOMIZED OUTCOME
2b. Increase in sector employers making commitments to better support WBL opportunities and/or employment, retention, and advancement of CP participants.	Outcome 2b - **Cybersecurity:** Growth in the number of sector employers committing to bettering work-based learning (WBL) opportunities, which includes one or more of the following: provide WBL for consortium students, interview/hire program completers, or advance incumbent workers in salary/title, upon credential completion. Baseline number reflects existing employers consortium-wide who already have demonstrated this commitment either through past practice or a letter (on file). The target number will be measured by the number of additional letters of commitment to increasing WBL opportunities by sector employers consortium-wide.
3a. Design or implementation of new, accelerated instructional techniques/technologies, including use of advanced online and technology-enabled learning	Outcome 3a - **Advanced Manufacturing**: Increase the number of stackable credentials that are fully developed and implemented for hybrid delivery.
3a. Design or implementation of new, accelerated instructional techniques/technologies, including use of advanced online and technology-enabled learning	Outcome 3a - **Cybersecurity:** Increase the number of stackable credentials that are fully developed and implemented for hybrid delivery.
3b. Measure of restructuring or alignment of educational/training programs based on local or regional labor market data.	Outcome 3b - **Advanced Manufacturing**: Increase availability of stackable, industry-certified credentials that align directly to the regional workforce at each consortium

SCC PERFORMANCE OUTCOME AREA	GRANTEE CUSTOMIZED OUTCOME
	institution. Baseline number reflects total number of stackable credentials consortium-wide.
3b. Measure of restructuring or alignment of educational/training programs based on local or regional labor market data.	Outcome 3b - **Cybersecurity:** Increase availability of stackable, industry-certified credentials that align directly to the regional workforce at each consortium institution. Baseline number reflects total number of stackable credentials consortium-wide.
4a. Increase in program and policy alignment across systems and/or decrease in duplicative services or service gaps.	Outcome 4a - **Advanced Manufacturing**: Increase the number of certificate programs that are either: WIOA-funding eligible, or eligible to be counted as credit for prior learning (CPL) and/or transferable to another consortium college. Each college will conduct an internal review of its policies and procedures related to CPL, transferability and WIOA eligibility to increase the number of programs that have these features.
4a. Increase in program and policy alignment across systems and/or decrease in duplicative services or service gaps.	Outcome 4a - **Cybersecurity:** Increase the number of certificate programs that are either: WIOA-funding eligible, or eligible to be counted as credit for prior learning (CPL) and/or transferable to another consortium college. Each college will conduct an internal review of its policies and procedures related to CPL, transferability and WIOA eligibility to increase the number of programs that have these features.

SCC PERFORMANCE OUTCOME AREA	GRANTEE CUSTOMIZED OUTCOME
4b. Development of new and/or expanded partnerships among key stakeholders resulting in streamlined or expanded services for participants	Outcome 4b - **Advanced Manufacturing**: Partnering community colleges share effective models to expand offering in advanced manufacturing and cybersecurity to students.
4b. Development of new and/or expanded partnerships among key stakeholders resulting in streamlined or expanded services for participants	Outcome 4b - **Cybersecurity:** Partnering community colleges share effective models to expand offering in advanced manufacturing and cybersecurity to students.
5a. Measure of removing significant systemic barriers among CP participants.	Outcome 5a - **Advanced Manufacturing**: Enhance credit for prior learning (CPL) and align credit transfer policies to increase number of students who attain a credential consortium wide.
5a. Measure of removing significant systemic barriers among CP participants.	Outcome 5a - **Cybersecurity:** Enhance credit for prior learning (CPL) and align credit transfer policies to increase number of students who attain a credential consortium wide.
5b. Increase in linkages developed throughout CP to encompass bridge programs, CTE programs, and WBL	Outcome 5b - **Advanced Manufacturing**: Increase the number of students completing two or more credentials in a program pathway.
5b. Increase in linkages developed throughout CP to encompass bridge programs, CTE programs, and WBL	Outcome 5b - **Cybersecurity**: Increase the number of students completing two or more credentials in a program pathway.

Northwest State Community College

SCC PERFORMANCE OUTCOME AREA	GRANTEE CUSTOMIZED OUTCOME
2a. Increase in breadth/depth of employer engagement and investment in educational/training programs.	Create an Advanced Manufacturing Steering Committee (with membership drawn from the Advanced Manufacturing Consortium) to guide the development and alignment of curriculum, identifying necessary skills, validating credentials, and informing course schedules to meet employer needs.
3a. Design or implementation of new, accelerated instructional techniques/technologies, including use of advanced online and technology-enabled learning	Increase Advanced Manufacturing short-term accelerated programs, single-credit stackable courses, and industry recognized credential offerings, using a hybrid model and implementing prior learning assessments with employer validation.
4a. Increase in program and policy alignment across systems and/or decrease in duplicative services or service gaps.	Outcome 4a: Collaborate with the workforce development system to attract, place, and retain new entrants into Advanced Manufacturing occupations/newly created courses.

Norwalk Community College

SCC PERFORMANCE OUTCOME AREA	GRANTEE CUSTOMIZED OUTCOME
2a. Increase in breadth/depth of employer engagement and investment in educational/training programs.	Increase in the number of regional healthcare sector partnerships in Connecticut
2b. Increase in sector employers making commitments to better support WBL opportunities and/or employment, retention, and advancement of CP participants.	Increase in the number of health care employers committing to providing work-based learning; and/or hiring community college healthcare education and training program participants, when openings exist.
3a. Design or implementation of new, accelerated instructional techniques/technologies, including use of advanced online and technology-enabled learning	Increase in the number of courses in the CT SHIP career pathways with interactive, animated training modules.
3b. Measure of restructuring or alignment of educational/training programs based on local or regional labor market data.	The number of programs in the CT SHIP career pathways expanding training capacity; and/or adjusting curriculum in response to labor market data and/or employer partner input.
4a. Increase in program and policy alignment across systems and/or decrease in duplicative services or service gaps.	Increase in the number of individuals in CT SHIP career pathway education and training programs receiving SNAP E&T
4b. Development of new and/or expanded partnerships among key stakeholders resulting in streamlined or expanded services for participants	Increase in the annual number of individuals receiving individual training accounts to participate in CT SHIP career pathway education and training programs

SCC PERFORMANCE OUTCOME AREA	GRANTEE CUSTOMIZED OUTCOME
5a. Measure of removing significant systemic barriers among CP participants.	The number of programs in the CT SHIP career pathways accelerating program completion time. [Accelerated program completion time is defined as lessening the amount of time students are in a program to complete (e.g., a 12-week program is reduced to 8 weeks; program structured to allow for completion in less time)]
5b. Increase in linkages developed throughout CP to encompass bridge programs, CTE programs, and WBL	Increase in the number of individuals in CT SHIP career pathway education and training programs participating in work-based learning (WBL)

RFCUNY

SCC PERFORMANCE OUTCOME AREA	GRANTEE CUSTOMIZED OUTCOME
2a. Increase in breadth/depth of employer engagement and investment in educational/training programs.	Total of 9 MOUs delineating the roles & responsibilities of the partnership
2b. Increase in sector employers making commitments to better support WBL opportunities and/or employment, retention, and advancement of CP participants.	Total of 9 industry partners revise policies to support WBL
3a. Design or implementation of new, accelerated instructional techniques/technologies, including use of advanced online and technology-enabled learning	CUNY-wide training in coordinated, culturally responsive pedagogical models, including the design of online/blended accelerated professional development modules that cover all sectors
3b. Measure of restructuring or alignment of educational/training programs based on local or regional labor market data.	(1) 16 online/blended programs will be enhanced
3b. Measure of restructuring or alignment of educational/training programs based on local or regional labor market data.	(2) Redesign stackable credentials mechanism through unified and streamlined dual enrollment/credit transfer/credit for prior learning processes
4a. Increase in program and policy alignment across systems and/or decrease in duplicative services or service gaps.	(1) A centralized web portal sharing information and documents (Better coordination and streamlining the relationships among WDB, the community colleges and the employers to eliminate

SCC PERFORMANCE OUTCOME AREA	GRANTEE CUSTOMIZED OUTCOME
4a. Increase in program and policy alignment across systems and/or decrease in duplicative services or service gaps.	(2) Improve campuses work flows and streamlines services through partnerships (including workforce system partners)
4b. Development of new and/or expanded partnerships among key stakeholders resulting in streamlined or expanded services for participants	(1) Establish relationships with all system components (including workforce system partners)
4b. Development of new and/or expanded partnerships among key stakeholders resulting in streamlined or expanded services for participants	(2) Establish relationships with all system components
4b. Development of new and/or expanded partnerships among key stakeholders resulting in streamlined or expanded services for participants	(3) Establish pathways with industry partners (recruitment and internships)
4b. Development of new and/or expanded partnerships among key stakeholders resulting in streamlined or expanded services for participants	(4) Assist participants entering internships, apprenticeships, and employment through the support of this grant
5a. Measure of removing significant systemic barriers among CP participants.	(1) Implementation of one CUNY wide unified and streamlined process for dual enrollment/credit transfer/credit for prior learning

SCC PERFORMANCE OUTCOME AREA	GRANTEE CUSTOMIZED OUTCOME
5a. Measure of removing significant systemic barriers among CP participants.	(2) Adopt a new student academic record management system compatible with CUNY academic departments and student service offices
5a. Measure of removing significant systemic barriers among CP participants.	(3) A long-term sustainability plan developed based on benchmarks
5b. Increase in linkages developed throughout CP to encompass bridge programs, CTE programs, and WBL	(1) Begin to provide wraparound services to CEWD students to improve the following baseline numbers: 20 participants enrolled in a program (total of 16 programs)
5b. Increase in linkages developed throughout CP to encompass bridge programs, CTE programs, and WBL	(2) Begin to provide wraparound services to CEWD students to improve the following baseline numbers: 60% completion rate
5b. Increase in linkages developed throughout CP to encompass bridge programs, CTE programs, and WBL	(3) Begin to provide wraparound services to CEWD students to improve the following baseline numbers: 5-10% of participants receiving dual credit/credit for prior learning/credit transfer
5b. Increase in linkages developed throughout CP to encompass bridge programs, CTE programs, and WBL	(4) Begin to provide wraparound services to CEWD students to improve the following baseline numbers: 60% of completers receiving WBL services
5b. Increase in linkages developed throughout CP to encompass bridge programs, CTE programs, and WBL	(5) Begin to provide wraparound services to CEWD students to improve the following baseline numbers: 60% of completers entering employment

SCC PERFORMANCE OUTCOME AREA	GRANTEE CUSTOMIZED OUTCOME
5b. Increase in linkages developed throughout CP to encompass bridge programs, CTE programs, and WBL	(6) Begin to provide wraparound services to CEWD students to improve the following baseline numbers: 60% of completers receiving supportive services (21st century workplace skills workshops)

Savannah Technical College

SCC PERFORMANCE OUTCOME AREA	GRANTEE CUSTOMIZED OUTCOME
2a. Increase in breadth/depth of employer engagement and investment in educational/training programs.	Outcome 2a: Increase the number of employers engaging directly with consortium colleges. The aspects of the program an employer may choose one or more aspects of are: • Designation of credentials important to their industry; • Sponsorship of programs designed to deliver learners with certifications;. • Active participation in course delivery; • Assist with marketing efforts to bring more learners to the credentialing programs.
2b. Increase in sector employers making commitments to better support WBL opportunities and/or employment, retention, and advancement of CP participants.	Outcome 2b: Increasing the number of work-based learning opportunities.
3a. Design or implementation of new, accelerated instructional techniques/technologies, including use of advanced online and technology-enabled learning	Outcome 3a: Increase the number of courses that integrate augmented reality or advanced online learning environments.
3a. Design or implementation of new, accelerated instructional techniques/technologies, including	Outcome 3a(2): Increase the number of courses that integrate advanced learning environments.

SCC PERFORMANCE OUTCOME AREA	GRANTEE CUSTOMIZED OUTCOME
use of advanced online and technology-enabled learning	
3b. Measure of restructuring or alignment of educational/training programs based on local or regional labor market data.	Outcome 3b(1): New Micro-credential courses
3b. Measure of restructuring or alignment of educational/training programs based on local or regional labor market data.	Outcome 3b(2): Increase of credit for prior learning awards through microcredentialing.
3b. Measure of restructuring or alignment of educational/training programs based on local or regional labor market data.	Outcome 3b(3) Micro-Credentialing System
4a. Increase in program and policy alignment across systems and/or decrease in duplicative services or service gaps.	Outcome 4a: Increase approved micro-credentials by State Workforce System
4b. Development of new and/or expanded partnerships among key stakeholders resulting in streamlined or expanded services for participants	Outcome 4b: Increase the number if IET offerings in Manufacturing, IT, and Healthcare
4b. Development of new and/or expanded partnerships among key stakeholders resulting in streamlined or expanded services for participants	Outcome 4b(2): Internal articulation agreement

SCC PERFORMANCE OUTCOME AREA	GRANTEE CUSTOMIZED OUTCOME
5a. Measure of removing significant systemic barriers among CP participants.	Outcome 5a: Increase the number of micro-credentials earned
5b. Increase in linkages developed throughout CP to encompass bridge programs, CTE programs, and WBL	Outcome 5b: Increase the number of bridge programs
5b. Increase in linkages developed throughout CP to encompass bridge programs, CTE programs, and WBL	Outcome 5b(2): Increase the number of bridge program certifications facilitated through the SCC grant

Virginia Peninsula

SCC PERFORMANCE OUTCOME AREA	GRANTEE CUSTOMIZED OUTCOME
2a. Increase in breadth/depth of employer engagement and investment in educational/training programs.	(1) Establish a new Trades Programs Advisory Board integrating both Upper Peninsula and Hampton-based programs, with advisor representatives from both those areas with business expertise and regional perspectives in construction trades, and shipbuilding/repair and its related manufacturing occupations (machining and welding).
2b. Increase in sector employers making commitments to better support WBL opportunities and/or employment, retention, and advancement of CP participants.	(1) AECE programs will be delivered either completely on-line or in a hybrid model with a minimum of 50% of courses offered on-line. NOTE: Although VPCC supports dual enrollment and credit for prior learning, it is not setting specific performance targets for them under the grant.
2b. Increase in sector employers making commitments to better support WBL opportunities and/or employment, retention, and advancement of CP participants.	(2) Increase employer partnering at each level of involvement, advisory, hands-on and strategic. #'s represent total AECE programs; each program has set its own outcome goals.
3a. Design or implementation of new, accelerated instructional techniques/technologies, including use of advanced online and technology-enabled learning	(1) AECE programs will be delivered either completely on-line or in a hybrid model with a minimum of 50% of courses offered on-line. NOTE: Although TNCC supports dual enrollment and credit for prior learning, it is not setting specific performance targets for them under the grant.

SCC PERFORMANCE OUTCOME AREA	GRANTEE CUSTOMIZED OUTCOME
3a. Design or implementation of new, accelerated instructional techniques/technologies, including use of advanced online and technology-enabled learning	(2) Offer workforce trades training in Upper Peninsula region to fill a service gap in availability of construction trades training
3a. Design or implementation of new, accelerated instructional techniques/technologies, including use of advanced online and technology-enabled learning	(3) Offer workforce trades training in the Upper Peninsula to fill a service gap in availability of training in trades that support the shipbuilding/repair industry and its related manufacturing occupations (machining and welding)
3a. Design or implementation of new, accelerated instructional techniques/technologies, including use of advanced online and technology-enabled learning	(4) Offer PIVA Bridge program for prospective workforce trades training students
3a. Design or implementation of new, accelerated instructional techniques/technologies, including use of advanced online and technology-enabled learning	(5) Offer new short-term academic program* in CAD to support the construction industry, including dual enrollment
3a. Design or implementation of new, accelerated instructional techniques/technologies, including use of advanced online and technology-enabled learning	(6) Offer new short-term program* in CAD (virtual machining) to support the shipbuilding/repair and manufacturing industries including dual enrollment

SCC PERFORMANCE OUTCOME AREA	GRANTEE CUSTOMIZED OUTCOME
3a. Design or implementation of new, accelerated instructional techniques/technologies, including use of advanced online and technology-enabled learning	(7) Offer new short-term academic program* in precision machining to support the shipbuilding/repair and manufacturing industries, including dual enrollment
4a. Increase in program and policy alignment across systems and/or decrease in duplicative services or service gaps.	(1) The workforce development council will partner with VPCC in determining the skill needs of employers and suitability of individuals for training/credential attainment
4a. Increase in program and policy alignment across systems and/or decrease in duplicative services or service gaps.	(2) The workforce development council will partner with VPCC in coordinating with AECE career coach for enrollment and supportive services referrals of WIOA Title 1 participants.
4a. Increase in program and policy alignment across systems and/or decrease in duplicative services or service gaps.	(3) The workforce development council will assist VPCC, as needed, with inclusion on eligible training provider lists and workforce programs
4a. Increase in program and policy alignment across systems and/or decrease in duplicative services or service gaps.	(4) The workforce development council will partner with VPCC in coordinating the sharing of follow-up data for WIOA Title 1 AECE participants

Appendix C. Highlights From the Evaluation Plans: Approaches and Designs

Grantee	Evaluation Approach							Research Design			
	Developmental	Formative*	Process	Implementation Fidelity	Summative*	Outcome	Other	Descriptive	Correlational	Inferential	Other
Norwalk Community College			X	X		X		X			
Forsyth Technical Community College	X		X			X		X		X	
Grand Rapids Community College		X			X		Participatory	X			
Northwest State Community College		X			X		Participatory	X			
Mt. Hood Community College		X			X		Participatory	X			
American River College	X	X				X		X			
Virginia Peninsula Community College		X	X		X			X			
Broward College		X		X		X		X			
Savannah Technical College			X			X		X			Empirical, Observational
Research Foundation CUNY: Queensborough Community College		X	X			X	Exploratory	X			
Long Beach City College		X	X		X	X		X			

Appendix D: Grantee Interim Report Data Sources

GRANTEE	DATA SOURCES	SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS
American River	Document review Interviews Focus groups Meeting observations	Interviews and focus groups were conducted with key project teams including core leadership teams, curriculum development teams, and partners facilitating employer engagement.
Broward	Interviews Surveys Site visit or observation	Interviews were conducted with program leadership, faculty, and students enrolled in project management and software development courses. Surveys were conducted with current IT A+ students (n = 59), project director, IT A+ instructors (n = 2), and the MicroHE advocate.
Forsyth	Focus groups Interviews Document reviews (meeting notes, recruiting, and marketing materials) Surveys Observations Administration data (enrollment)	Faculty survey: n = 32 (51% response rate) Student survey 1: n = 404 (may contain duplicates) Student survey 2: n = 235

GRANTEE	DATA SOURCES	SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS
Grand Rapids	Focus groups Interviews Administrative data Surveys	Two focus groups with consortium staff (n = 7) and interviews with industry partners (n = 2) Online faculty and staff survey (n = 18) Survey of apprenticeship students (n = 7) Quarterly outcomes survey completed by representatives from each consortium college (n = 5)
Mt. Hood	Surveys Interviews	Quarterly performance outcomes survey (project lead from each consortium college) Partner interviews: n = 7 (78% response rate) Faculty and staff surveys: n = 18
Northwest State	Interviews	Ten faculty and staff interviews (83% response rate) Five industry partner interviews (71% response rate) Four community partner interviews (80% response rate)

Norwalk	Focus Groups Interviews Document Reviews Observations Administrative Data Surveys Extant Data	Interviews were conducted with project staff and other key stakeholders. Participants included all five program leads from the consortium (and a supervisor at one of the colleges; 100% rate of response); one workforce development board partner (25% rate of response); and two employer partners as well as one program instructor who also worked for an employer partner (37.5% rate of response). The student questionnaire was administered multiple times based on program completion dates. Specifically, the survey was deployed within certified nursing assistant programs that began in September 2022 and concluded by December 2023. Overall, the survey was completed by 16 students, for a total response rate of 17.8%. The 16 students who participated in the survey represented three of the five consortium colleges, namely TCC (n = 10), GCC (n = 4), and HCC (n = 2). Most respondents (n = 11) were still enrolled in the program at the time of survey participation, with five having already completed. In terms of racial

GRANTEE	DATA SOURCES	SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS
		background, most students identified as Hispanic or Latino (n = 5), followed by Black or African American (n = 4), White (n = 3), and Asian (n = 1). Only one student identified as male; the 12 others reported being female. Students' ages ranged from 18–54 (M = 30.4). (Note: only 13 of the 16 student respondents provided demographic information contributing to the difference in n.)
Savannah	Documents (program and policy documents, program newsletters, meeting minutes, progress reports, state and local workforce plans) Electronic administrative records Local area data (local unemployment rates, wages) Meeting observations Interviews	Interviews with 11 staff members and administrators

GRANTEE	DATA SOURCES	SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS
Virginia Peninsula	Partner interviews and focus groups Advisory board survey Student surveys Institutional data (student data) Document review (meeting minutes, quarterly COR reports, quarter project work plans, quarterly reports)	Industry partner interviews n = 3 Faculty interviews n = 3 Project team focus group n = 6 Advisory Board survey n = 7 Student survey 1 (credit course): n = 12 (35% response rate) Student survey 2 (credit course): n = 9 (20% response rate) Student survey 3 (welding): n = 7

Note: This chart includes data sources from the nine grantees whose interim reports are included in this synthesis.