**Rural Guided Pathways Project**

**Overview and Application**

NCII is launching the Rural Guided Pathways Project and inviting community colleges to apply for the first cohort of this new initiative. Applications, including signed participation agreements, are due March 1, 2022.

To apply, complete the application and participation agreement. Email both documents to Sarah Cale at sarah@ncii-improve.com, no later than March 1, 2022.

For more information, including details about the program’s professional development and support, the selection process and criteria, and key dates, visit
[ncii-improve.com/rural-guided-pathways-project/](https://ncii-improve.com/rural-guided-pathways-project/).

**Overview**

The Rural Guided Pathways Project is a three-year project in which a national cohort of fifteen rural community colleges will work with each other — and with community partners in their regions — to implement evidence-based, institution-wide reforms grounded in the guided pathways framework. Participating colleges commit to:

* Designing and implementing a better student experience at their colleges.
* Collaborating with key stakeholders in their regions to increase economic opportunity in the region and be partners in the implementation of a cross-sector approach to guided pathways.
* Implementing evidence-based reforms that will address inequity and lead to improved educational and workforce outcomes.

This project is the first of its kind in two ways:

**1. Rural focus.** It is the first time a pathways institute structure is focused specifically on the needs of rural institutions.

**2. Community partners.** It is the first time community partners are deeply embedded in pathways implementation.

The Rural Guided Pathways Project is a three-year project that is funded by Ascendium Education Group and a small group of regional philanthropies. Applications are due March 1, 2022. Following a selection process led by NCII and including national partners, fifteen institutions will be selected for participation. The project begins in spring 2022 and ends in August 2024.

The curriculum includes six Institutes over three years, site visits, and virtual consultation. NCII will provide project leadership and build on longstanding partnerships with the Community College Research Center and the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program to support participating colleges. Other partners will bring additional content expertise as we develop the curriculum and materials.

**Application**

**Part One: College Information**

Note: Only two-year public institutions are eligible.

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| --- | --- |
| Institution name |  |
| Institution address |  |
| Contact person for this application | Name |  |
| Title |  |
| Email |  |
| Phone |  |
| Institution CEO | Name |  |
| Email |  |
| Phone |  |
| Length of tenure |  |
| CEO’s assistant | Name |  |
| Email |  |
| Phone |  |

**Part Two: Application Questions** (Please respond in no more than 350 words per question.)

**1. This project is designed for colleges that are located in rural communities or serve rural communities as part of their service region. Briefly describe your service area and your student population with a focus on your rural constituency.**

**2. Has your institution participated in (a) any national or state-based student success reform initiatives; and/or (b) any significant regional economic development / economic mobility initiatives? If so, please list each initiative and describe how that work impacted the student experience at your institution.**

**3. Summarize your college’s experience with guided pathways to date. What discussions about guided pathways have taken place at your college? Have you begun implementing any guided pathways practices? If so, briefly describe two or three highlights of this work.**

**4. Using the planning elements of the guided pathways framework, describe the work your college has done to create the conditions for implementing guided pathways. Include information about the institutional research capacity at your institution and the IT capacity to support data use in planning, decision-making, and monitoring student progress.**

**5. Using the four implementation pillars of the guided pathways framework, describe the top two or three priorities that your institution might address as part of this project. In your response, explain what aspects of the student experience have been experienced inequitably by historically underserved students (e.g., students of color, students living in poverty, first-generation students, and displaced adults).**

**6. Describe the most significant opportunities and constraints on economic mobility for the people and the region that the college serves. What role does the college play in increasing the economic vitality of the region?**

**7. Describe the college’s existing partnerships in creating educational pathways to family-supporting jobs and supporting economic mobility in the region. Highlight how a cross-sector pathways approach will leverage existing regional efforts to increase economic opportunity.**

**8. Describe your college’s existing developmental education practices, highlighting any reform efforts that the institution has implemented. Include the percentage of your incoming students who are required to take any developmental education courses and the percentage of your students that complete college-level English and college-level mathematics in their first year of enrollment.**

**9. Is there anything else we should know about your college or your community that would impact your college’s successful participation in the project?**