



New Grants Support a Spectrum of Student Success Initiatives

Ascendium's Board of Directors has approved nearly \$9 million in funding for new initiatives. This round of grants supports work on projects that include developing institutional governance leadership, increasing equitable student transfer outcomes, building pathways to success for returning adult students, supporting capacity-building and training for state education and workforce agencies around student transitions and identifying strategies to support institutional resiliency and student success for learners in Puerto Rico. These grants will support:

- Professional development for governing boards on prioritizing equitable student success through practice, policy and budget oversight by the [John N. Gardner Institute](#), in partnership with the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges.
- Work by the [American Association of Community Colleges](#) to increase equitable student transfer outcomes by providing direct coaching, technical assistance and ongoing support to pairs of two- and four-year institutions with a commitment to develop new transfer pathways for degrees leading to high-demand careers.
- Research by the [Tennessee Board of Regents - The College System of Tennessee](#) on pathways to success for adult students with some college credit but no degree to identify various supports necessary to increase success for adults who return to college.
- Development and delivery of training classes for two states by [Coleridge Initiative](#) to build capacity for state education and workforce agencies in the use of data to improve education and workforce transitions.
- Work by [Excelencia in Education](#) to identify strategies that can support institutional resiliency and promote student success for rural, Latinx learners in the midst of natural disasters and crises.



IHEP Releases Groundbreaking KPI Framework Report

The Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP) has released "[Supporting Success: The Higher Education in Prison Key Performance Indicator Framework](#)" with \$1.9 million in support from Ascendium. This much-anticipated framework sets the stage for a meaningful discussion on data collection practices within postsecondary education systems as it pertains to incarcerated learners, as well as setting a baseline for programs to evaluate their effectiveness and quality. Better data about postsecondary education in prison enables responsible stewardship of public and private dollars toward high-quality programs that lead to successful student outcomes. The framework details key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure student success across four major categories: student success outcomes, academic quality, civic engagement and soft skill development. What does that return on investment really look like? What barriers are in place and how do we remove them? Having a set of KPIs will help the field address those questions. [Read more about Ascendium's interest in funding this project.](#)



Strong Start To Finish Shows Early Promising Results: Case Studies

The Strong Start to Finish (SSTF) initiative to scale developmental education reforms is showing promising results, according to early progress reports on the six participating higher education systems. An initiative of The Education Commission of the States, SSTF reports in its [Learning from the Reform](#) series that these systems are doubling the percentage of students who complete gateway college courses in half the time. The systems implemented such reforms as revising placement policies, creating course pathways for students and streamlining or eliminating developmental education classes. Detailed case studies are available for the participating systems: [Arkansas](#), [California](#), [The City University of New York \(CUNY\)](#), [Georgia](#), [Ohio](#) and [The State University of New York \(SUNY\)](#).

Ascendium contributed \$7.15 million to this multi-year initiative, which launched in 2017. Funding partners Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and The Kresge Foundation also contributed, for a total of over \$13 million. [Read more on Ascendium's interest in funding this project.](#)

On the Go: Find Ascendium Staff in the Field — Virtually

Ascendium Education Group has cancelled all staff travel plans until further notice due to COVID-19 concerns, but we are supporting and attending virtual events. We hope everyone stays safe and we look forward to participating in live events in the coming months. We will continue to share past virtual event recordings and resource links and future opportunities to connect with Ascendium staff.

The Chronicle of Higher Education Virtual Forum: "What it Takes to be a Student-Centered Institution Now"

September 10 ([recorded webinar](#))

Ascendium is a proud sponsor of this event

[Council for Opportunity in Education Virtual Conference](#)

September 21-23

Ascendium is a proud sponsor of this event

[Grantmakers for Education Learning Series: "Rural Education 101: What Funders Need to Know About Rural U.S"](#)

September 25

[The Chronicle of Higher Education Virtual Forum: "Transfer Students as a Key to Institutional Resilience"](#)

September 29

Ascendium is a proud sponsor of this event

[ASU+GSV 2020 Virtual Summit](#)

September 29-October 1 & 8

Ascendium is a proud sponsor of this event

[Grantmakers for Education Conference Year-Round Learning Session](#)

October 7

Rebecca Villarreal, presenter: "Results Café: GFE LEAD Impact Group's Summer Fellows Findings"

Ascendium is a proud sponsor of this event

[Grantmakers for Education Conference Week](#)

October 12-16

Jule Hall, presenter: "The Future of Racial Justice"

Ascendium is a proud sponsor of this event

[The Chronicle of Higher Education Virtual Forum: "Resilient Rural Colleges"](#) (registration open soon)

October 14

Ascendium is a proud sponsor of this event

[CAEL Virtual Conference](#)

November 4-6

[C-BEN CBExchange Virtual Edition](#)

November 10-13

[National Forum to Advance Rural Education](#)

November 12-13

Ascendium is a proud sponsor of this event

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Ascendium Education Group, Inc.

2501 International Ln

Madison, WI 53704-3180

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SENT BY news@ascendiumeducation.org

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