

# Single Moms Success

## Design Challenge Overview

How might community colleges dramatically improve completion rates for single mothers by intentionally addressing the unique needs of this population?

### Background

In 2016, 2.1 million single mothers were enrolled in postsecondary education, representing over 10% of the entire postsecondary population, according to a 2017 report by the Institute for Women's Policy Research. As a group, these learners are women who, despite the many logistical and personal obstacles facing them, have courageously stepped up to take on additional responsibilities to improve life circumstances for themselves and their children. The numbers bear out that burden:

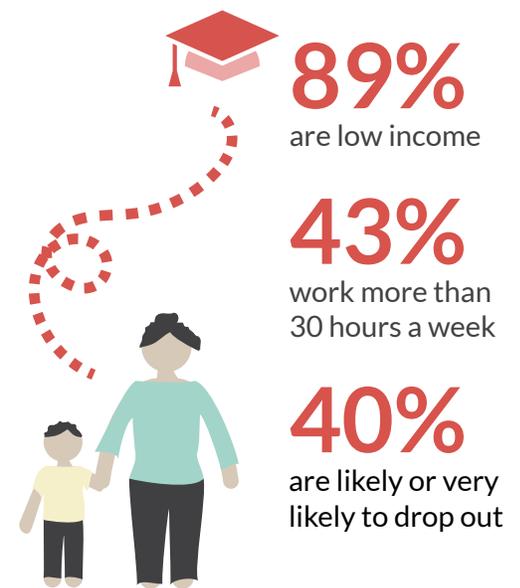
Despite their significant presence in the postsecondary sector, single mothers are rarely the focus of campus programming and little is known about the best ways to move the needle for these learners. To better understand and address the challenges that single moms face, the Lab will lead four community colleges in developing and testing innovative solutions to improve completion rates for single mothers through intentional targeting of the unique needs of this population.

The Single Moms Success Design Challenge is a student-centered design-innovation process led by the Education Design Lab and generously supported by the ECMC Foundation. Four regionally accredited, public community colleges from across the country will be selected to participate in this structured engagement consisting of an intensive two-year design and prototype phase, followed by a multi-year evaluation. Using a four-stage innovative process, institutions will design, launch and test scalable interventions to dramatically improve attainment rates for single mothers who seek to obtain a degree or high-quality credential from community college.

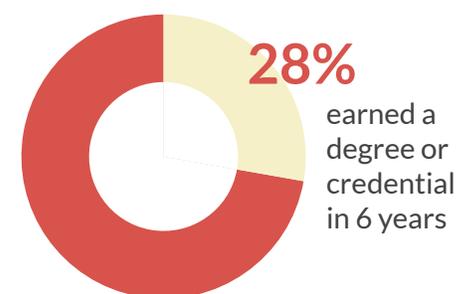
### About the Lab

Education Design Lab is a nonprofit that designs, tests, and implements unique higher education models and credentials that address the rapidly changing economy and emerging technology opportunities. The Lab demonstrates where technology, rigor and design can improve opportunity for historically underserved students to maximize their potential in the higher education system.

### What obstacles do single mothers face when seeking a degree?



*Of single mothers who entered college between 2003 and 2009:*



Kruvelis, Melanie, Lindsey Reichlin Cruse, and Barbara Gault. (2017) *Single Mothers in College: Growing Enrollment, Financial Challenges, and the Benefits of Attainment*. Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research. Retrieved from [https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/C460\\_Single-Mothers-Briefing-Paper-8.21.17-final.pdf](https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/C460_Single-Mothers-Briefing-Paper-8.21.17-final.pdf).

Alva, Jorge Klor de, and Mark Schneider. (2013) *What's the value of an associate's degree?: the return on investment for graduates and taxpayers*. San Francisco: Nexus Research and Policy Center; Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research. Retrieved from [https://www.air.org/sites/default/files/Value\\_of\\_an\\_Associate\\_Degree\\_10.13.pdf](https://www.air.org/sites/default/files/Value_of_an_Associate_Degree_10.13.pdf).

## Who gets to participate?

The Lab is seeking applications from institutions whose vision, mission and goals align with the project, including demonstration of institutional readiness and a track record for transformation efforts.

## What will this cost?

All costs - travel, hotel accommodations, and access to experts - will be covered by the Education Design Lab through the generous support of the ECMC foundation.

## What do selected schools receive?

Participating institutions will receive the following:

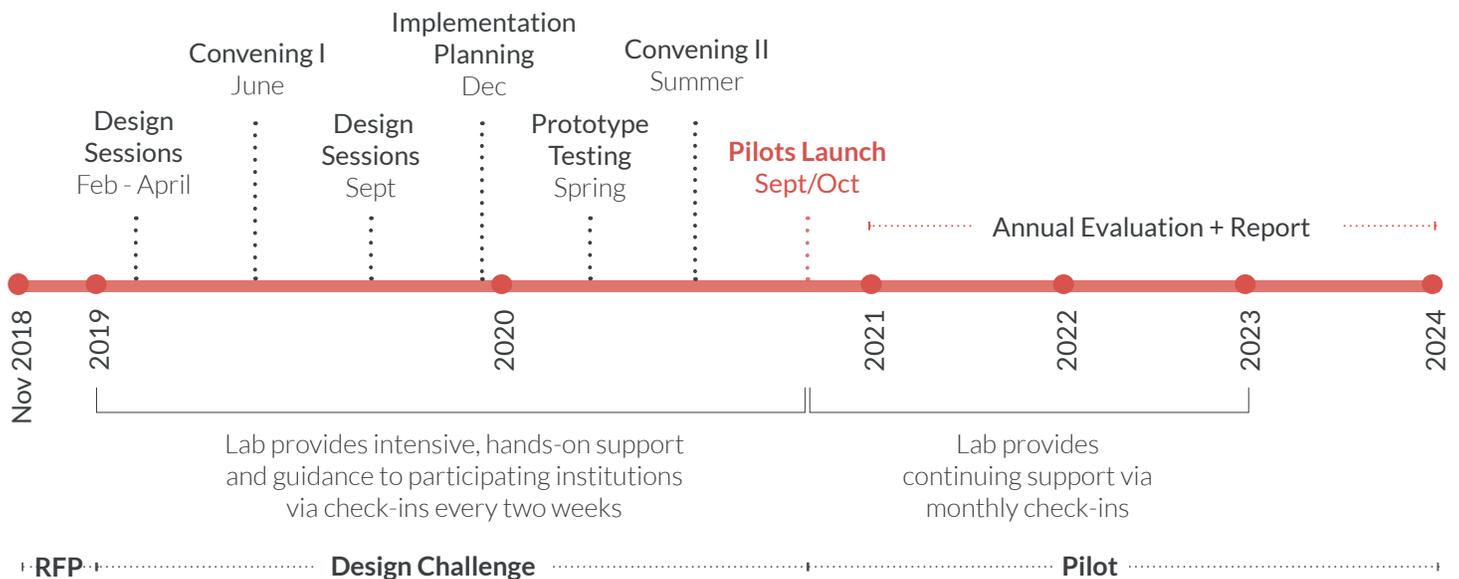
- 2-year design process led by higher education design specialists; culminating in pilot
- Eligibility to receive one-time “start-up fund” \$50k award to support the pilot launch on campus
- 2 national convenings and 2 on-campus design sessions
- Structured Lab Team support
- Access to Subject Matter Experts
- Knowledge Dissemination and Evaluation

## What is my school’s commitment?

Participating institutions commit to the following:

- Convene a cross-functional working group of critical stakeholders
- Commit to achieve 30% growth in associate degree or high-quality credential attainment for single mother learners
- Demonstrate and maintain commitment at presidents’ level
- Fully participate in the Single Moms Success Learning Cohort/Community

## Timeline: From RFP to Pilot Launch



To download the RFP, please visit our Single Moms Success Design Challenge page.

For media inquiries, please contact us at [connect@eddesignlab.org](mailto:connect@eddesignlab.org).

Prospective applicants are encouraged to attend an informational webinar on November 28, 2018, at 2pm EDT. Register here.