

Community College Growth Engine Fund

Leading the Nation + Their Regions in Creating
“Rapid-Response Pathways” with Employers

The Community College Growth Engine Fund is a catalytic investment in community colleges to position them as drivers between innovation and employment. The Fund is being launched in response to the urgent need for community colleges to deliver skills-focused, market-driven education as regions mitigate the growing skills gap. The current COVID-19 crisis, the massive unemployment and displacement that has resulted, and the historic inequities in our labor market underscore the need for urgency to drive the learnings for how community colleges shorten the horizon to skill-based employment while putting learners on the path toward degree attainment. The Fund will create a roadmap for scale to reach every learner and worker in the country and give them a path to economic dignity.

Hosted by the Education Design Lab, the Fund will select six forward-leaning community colleges and systems to lead a demonstration of how community colleges can leverage innovation capacity, regional partnerships, and dynamic labor market data to identify and build sub-degree “micro-pathways” with designated credentials that employers validate. These micro-pathways will enable learners to earn at-or-above median wage salaries and stackable credit for degree attainment.

Together these institutions, with support from the Lab, will produce new pathway models, new credential signal power for industry groups to rally around, as well as learnings and insights to enable adoption, replication, and scale by other learning providers and regions.

Participating systems and institutions will receive a startup award of \$100,000 to launch their micro-pathways, along with hands-on support from Education Design Lab. The cohort will draw upon real-time labor market data to identify the most in-demand careers in their regions and create “micro-pathways” that lead to earnings at or above the median wage. The League for Innovation in the Community College will help lead a community of practice of college presidents and employer partners, and the Federal Reserve Banks of Philadelphia and Cleveland will provide cutting-edge research into the labor market demand for specific skills and credentials.



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Community colleges have always demonstrated agility in responding to the needs of their region’s employers. This effort will test new models—and help to codify new best practices—for creating micro-pathways that best serve learners and employers.

Dr. Rufus Glasper

CEO of the League for Innovation
in the Community College

The Community College Growth Engine Fund Will Deliver:

New Education to Career Pathways

18 new models to benefit an additional 5,000 learners annually at scale that can further be shared with and scaled to 1,100+ community colleges

New Innovation Capacity

6 community colleges will build lasting infrastructure for sustained change management

New Employer-plus Collaboratives that Connect In-Demand Jobs with Education

Six robust, regional collaboratives, to include stakeholders, such as public agencies, CBOs, economic development leaders and local funders, will create seamless pathways to employment

Best Practices + Peer Learning

New employer-driven models, tools, and processes shared with a global community of practice

21st Century Skills Integration

Increased capacity to integrate in-demand 21st Century skill into technical programs and certificates

Roadmap for Scale

Partners spanning every sector, from policymakers to industry to social enterprises, will be aggregated to proliferate and scale these pathways to reach every learner and worker in our country

Stay connected to the Lab's work on the Growth Engine Fund

Get an inside look on our on-the-ground work—delivered right to your mailbox.

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eddesignlab.org/project/ccgef

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