

Beaufort County Community College (NC) P116W210010, \$1,237,500.00. BCCC proposes to restructure its current student advising process by developing a Centralized Advising Center (CAC) for all students who have enrolled in fewer than 16 credit hours as well as all students who transfer into BCCC for the first semester. The College requires a more controlled, centralized advising model that provides continuous, individualized advising to the most vulnerable of our student population. The Centralized Advising Center and its components, including Early Alert System software, will create a culture of “wrap-around” academic and student support designed to eliminate student “loss points” in our curricula and help ensure the success of students from all backgrounds. The goal for this new advising center model is to increase student retention by 15% and completion rates by 15% through the development of a Centralized Advising Center, aligning with our vision to be an innovative community leader that promotes economic and social mobility through educational opportunities. BCCC proposes to implement the Centralized Advising Center through four main goals, including (i) establish of CAC that serves students with 16 or fewer credit hours as well as first semester transfer students, (ii) assist AGE-PRN students in determining a pathway that leads to credentials necessary for gainful employment or education continuation, (iii) provide intense and intrusive support services to underserved and not college-ready students, and (iv) implement an Early Alert System to support persistence, retention, completion, graduation, and overall student retention. The proposed project meets the Competitive Preference Priorities by supporting access to technology for rural students in the areas of hybrid/blended learning, supplemental instruction, advising, and early alert. Hybrid/blended learning will be conducted using synchronous audiovisual technology through North Carolina Information Highway (NCIH) rooms and equipment supported by recent USDA Distance Learning / Telemedicine grants. Rural students will benefit from supplemental instruction through online real-time tutoring services provided through the College’s Learning Enhancement Center (LEC) in partnership with tutor.com, a 3rd party supplemental instruction provider. Academic advising and coaching, especially as it relates to the first semester experience and career services, will be conducted in a learning community model in which advisors and coaches interact with rural students through NCIH equipment and face-to-face visits as needed. Furthermore, the project will undergo the implementation of in-take career services and development of new or modified career pathways aligned to industry needs. To that end, the College will partner with local workforce development boards (WDBs), specifically Rivers East and Northeast Workforce Development Board, to include career in-take services at the time of admissions. This cross-agency coordination will create new opportunities for students to receive career services during and after their post-secondary education. More specifically, advisors in the Advising Center will assist prospective students in completion of career assessments and inventories at time of application, identify relevant educational pathways that align with these inventories, and assist students in enrolling in relevant educational pathways. A second component of the project involving cross-agency coordination is development of new, and modified, career pathways. In alignment with ongoing work related to Perkins V, the College will conduct a Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) in collaboration with department chairs, K12 partners, WDBs, current, and former students, program advisory boards, and business / industry partners. The CLNA process will be informed from an environmental scan of regional occupations, historical student performance data, career placement data, and articulation agreements with regional K12 partners. The product of this work will be new, or modified, career pathways and corresponding educational programming that meet current and future needs in the region.

Texas A&M University-Commerce (TX) P116W210021, \$1,230,603.00, in consortium with the Texas A&M University Commerce (TAMUC) College Education and Office of Enrollment Management, Jobs For the Future (JFF), F.A.C.T. Education (Foundation for the Advancement of Career and Technical Education), and ProEd Consulting, proposes to establish the *Attaining College Entry and Success (ACES)* project. The targeted population of participants are Black, Hispanic, and/or economically disadvantaged students; rising seniors, first generation college students, and committed to attending Texas A&M Commerce. ACES will provide a work-based course with exploratory learning opportunities for a cohort of students in Commerce and Community Independent School Districts. Students will be mentored by a College Advisor Mentor in high school and college, receive assessment tutoring, participate in a summer immersion camp, and explore local industries. At TAMUC, students will share a common living and learning space. Students will receive college support through TAMUC support services including advising, financial aid awareness, and career counseling, and gain an internship at the end sophomore year of college. Anticipated results include college entry, completion of the first two years of college, and early selection of the college major leading to degree required employment. The consortium will address all 5 subcomponents of the Absolute Priority. The consortium meets the Competitive Preference Priorities by designing and implementing a work-based curriculum that includes blended learning; students will be provided technological devices to gain easier access to high quality internet; and ACES is collaborative effort between TAMUC School Education, the TAMUC Office of Enrollment Management, JFF, F.A.C.T. Education, and ProEd Consulting connecting rural school district with industry and TAMUC.

Independence Community College (KS) P116W210035, \$1,032,565.00, in collaboration with its area Workforce Center and 11 rural high schools in Kansas and Oklahoma proposes to establish the *Fostering Post-Secondary Employment, Apprenticeship, Internship, and Higher Education Opportunities for Rural Kansas and Oklahoma* project. Independence Community College serves a student population of 36% of students who attended a high school located in a rural area. The target population of the project are 11 rural high schools in rural locale codes as identified by the NCES Locale Map as either 41, 42, or 43. This project will create, promote, and enroll rural students in career pathway opportunities. These opportunities include apprenticeship, internship, and employment options, to be developed with the Workforce Center in cooperation with area industries. Traditional higher education pathways will also be offered. The goals are to reach rural students who attend geographically isolated high schools and match students' interests and aptitudes with the career or academic pathways. The outcome will be greater employment of rural citizens in post-secondary careers, particularly in high-wage, high-demand professions; and, also, greater rates of enrollment and success for rural students in traditional higher education. Independence Community College is highly suited for success, as it is in the midst of a large rural area. The project will address all 5 subcomponents of the Absolute Priority. The consortium meets the Competitive Preference Priorities by aiding rural students with virtual learning options as well as compacted oncampus enrollment options better suited to students in sparsely populated rural areas. This will be achieved through: Offering virtual, hybrid study and other online options; in particular, aid institutional faculty to design curriculum for and offer more Universal Design for Learning options such as Canvas Studio. The activities and strategies implemented through this position will promote opportunity for rural students a wider choice of learning models through technology. Furthermore, the project will aid rural students with institution of an integrated program that engages with area economic development entities. This will be achieved through: Hiring one full-time dedicated Career Pathways Advisor, aided by Project Director. The activities and strategies implemented through this position will improve outcomes for rural students through the development of career pathways aligned to high-skill, high-wage or indemand industry sectors and occupations in the region in partnership with regional economic development entities, workforce agencies, regional employers, or other relevant nonprofit organizations.

Central Georgia Technical College (GA) P116W210043, \$488,525.00, proposes to establish the *HOPE for Central Georgia* project. The project meets all 5 subcomponents of the Absolute Priority and serves 36.3% of students from high schools located in rural areas. Central Georgia Technical College (CGTC) proposes to utilize Rural Postsecondary and Economic Development grant funding to improve learning outcomes for High School and Adult Education Dual Enrollment students in rural counties throughout central Georgia. The central Georgia region presents significant opportunities for rural students to enter careers in high-wage, in-demand occupations, with the aerospace industry being a prime area of growth. CGTC will collaborate with school districts to enroll rural students in Aircraft Structural Technology and Aviation Maintenance programs located at the Georgia Aerospace Training and Sustainment Center, allowing dual enrollment students to learn and work side-by-side on actual aviation maintenance projects with Robins Air Force Base personnel. Transportation barriers of rural students will be addressed with grant funds to support equitable access to specialized training sites. Students entering programs targeted by this initiative may apply for a Georgia HOPE Career Grant, a type of financial aid available to qualified students who enroll in select majors specifically aligned with industries strategically important to the state's economic growth. The anticipate results of the project are: (1) To increase rural students access to postsecondary programs annually. The number of rural students receiving direct student services supported by the grant will meet or exceed 500 annually, and the change in the annual enrollment rate of rural students at CGTC who receive direct student services supported by the grant from one year to the next will meet or exceed 5%. (2) Increase rural student usage of student support services annually. The number of rural students receiving direct student services supported by the grant that transfer to a four-year institution or obtain a degree or certificate of completion will meet or exceed 200 annually, and the number of rural students served by the program who obtain a paid internship, apprenticeship, or employment will meet or exceed 100 annually. The project meets Competitive Preference Priority #1 by providing telepresence equipment and a technology lending library will support the delivery of other STEM-related postsecondary programs to rural high schools and career academies. The project meets Competitive Preference Priority #2 by requiring cross-agency coordination with CGTC, Robins Air Force Base, rural high schools, and other partners positioned to recruit, serve, or otherwise support rural postsecondary students throughout central Georgia.

Dyersburg State Community College (TN) P116W210047, \$1,237,431.00, in partnership with Workforce Midsouth (WMS) – the Greater Memphis Local Workforce Board (GML WDB), the Northwest Tennessee Development District and Northwest Tennessee Human Resource Agency, West Tennessee Healthcare, Baptist Memorial Hospital – Tipton, Baptist Memorial Hospital – Union City, Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board, Faculty advisors of Health Occupations Students of America, and 8 high schools, proposes to establish the *Increasing Access and Completion to Surgical Technology Education in West Tennessee* project. The applicant serves a large portion of students from a 20 rural county area, and all of their high school partners are located in areas identified as rural by the NCES locale codes. The target population are students from rural West Tennessee high schools and employees at ten hospitals and the general adult population who would like to increase their skills and their earning power. The project meets all 5 subcomponents of the Absolute Priority. The project proposes the activities of: Goal #1: To increase postsecondary education access, success, and completion among rural students in Northwest Tennessee through the initiation of a Surgical Technology program that will meet the needs of the local healthcare system, provide a career pathway for students, which is affordable and lead to a high skill, high-wage, and in-demand occupation. Goal #2: To increase the number of rural students who enter the surgical technology program by conducting recruitment activities in eight rural West Tennessee high schools and ten hospitals, and recruitment to the general adult population who would like to earn a higher certification and higher salary. Goal #3: To develop a program that focuses on student success in a career pathway that provides support services, intrusive advising, student financial aid, employment/placement services, and university transfer services. Goal #4: To sustain the program after the three-year funding period. The anticipated results are that DSCC will enroll 48 students from rural areas in West Tennessee in the Associate of Applied Sciences in Surgical Technology (24 students in the first cohort beginning in August 2023 and 24 students in the second cohort beginning in August 2024); All enrolled students in the Associate of Applied Sciences in Surgical Technology program will receive student support services such as tutoring, mentoring, and intrusive advising beginning in the Fall of 2023 and continue with job placement assistance; DSCC anticipates that 96% of the first cohort of students will graduate in May 2025; DSCC anticipates that 96% of the second cohort of students will graduate in May 2026; DSCC anticipates that 100% of the first cohort of students of the first and second cohorts will earn a certificate from the National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting by 2025. The project meet Competitive Preference Priority 1 as the DSCC’s proposal seeks to provide to students Zoom technology, flexible classroom instructional models, increased access to technology for students in need through the checkout program and the on-campus computer labs and providing online and hybrid course options. Furthermore, the project meets Competitive Preference Priority 2 through dual-enrollment and embedded certification course partnerships with 8 high schools. By preparing rising high school seniors with credentials for the job market and equipping them with the tools to begin an established career pathway, rural students in our service area benefit greatly. Our graduates are afforded seamless transfer opportunities through our Tennessee Pathway Program to our area universities such as University of Tennessee at Martin and University of Memphis. The project also has partnerships with two workforce boards to helps serve students in rural areas, through financial assistance and stipends, and to provide job search assistance.

Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KY) P116W210052, \$1,070,170.00, in partnership with Western Kentucky University proposes to establish the *Rural Outreach: Opportunities toward Success (RO:ots)* project. The RO:ots project targets faculty, staff, and students. The three project goals identified for RO:ots meet the absolute priority for the grant. There are three activity components that will be implemented, using evidence-based strategies, that when completed will achieve the project goals and objectives. Goal 1: Increase Access to postsecondary education for rural students. Activity 1: Implement SCC community mentor program to provide student and community supports. (AP-part a, b, c, d; CPP1, CPP2); Goal 2: Increase Support for rural students pursuing postsecondary education. Activity 2: Implement SCC Student Fellows program that provides intensive, hands-on academic and non-academic support for rural students in designated career pathways. (AP-part b, c, d); Goal 3: Increase Success and Completion in postsecondary education for rural students. Activity 3: Deliver professional development for SCC faculty and staff that builds awareness of rural student needs and challenges, and how to help rural students pursue high-demand, high-skill, high-wage careers. (AP-Part b, c, d; CPP1, CPP2) The anticipated results are Objective 1.1: Increase the number of rural students who enroll in SCC. (AP-part a); Objective 1.2: Increase awareness of postsecondary options for rural students in SCC service area. (AP-part a); Objective 1.3: Increase access to services for rural students pursuing postsecondary options at distance sites. (AP-part b, c); Objective 1.4: Collaborate with rural middle/high schools to build relationships with students. (AP-part a); Objective 1.5: Increase college readiness preparation. (AP-part a); Objective 2.1: Create a cohort model for students in rural areas pursuing defined career pathways. (AP-part b, c, d; CP1); Objective 2.2: Increase awareness of student services and success initiatives, especially to rural students. (AP-part b); Objective 2.3: Increase training and professional development for staff on unique needs of rural students. (CP1); Objective 2.4: Increase professional development for faculty on how to address learner variability and prepare them for careers. (CP1); Objective 2.5: Increase career preparation training for rural students. (AP-part d); Objective 2.6: Increase comprehensive supports to rural students. (CP1); Objective 3.1: Increase graduation rates for rural students in service area. (AP-part a); Objective 3.2: Increase transfer rates for rural students in service area. (AP-part a, b); Objective 3.3: Support the deployment of career pathways, especially those targeting rural students. (AP part d, CP2); and Objective 3.4: Increase the awareness of paid apprenticeships, internships, and job opportunities for rural students. (AP part d) The RO:ots initiative addresses the two RPED Competitive Preference Priorities (CCP1) and (CPP2) and the Absolute Priority (AP) as indicated in the activities listed above.

Genesee Community College (NY) P116W210060, \$1,178,198.00, in partnership with Lyndonville and Oakfield-Alabama Central School Districts proposes to establish the *Pathways to Success* project. The target population is 400 rural secondary students, 200 of whom will continue to be served at the college level. The project activities include engagement of secondary students, creation of a Guided Pathway model to enhance student success, creation of learning hubs at campus centers, increasing job readiness and placement, and creation of a sustainable model for rural student success. The anticipated results are 400 rural secondary students will receive college application assistance, 90% of participants who graduate will enroll in college, increase rural enrollment by two percentage points each year; 95% of those who enroll in college will complete an individual, full-program education plan increasing time to graduation by 10%; 80% of students receiving direct services will transfer to a four-year college or obtain a degree or certificate - of those that do not continue to a four-year college, 90% will obtain a paid internship, apprenticeship, or employment. A formal sustainability plan will be implemented by December 2023. The Pathway to Success meets the Absolute Priority of the RPED competition by increasing rural students' postsecondary access, affordability, success, and completion by: a) Increasing the number and proportion of rural students as GCC will partner with two to four rural K-12 local education agencies ; b) Development and implementation of comprehensive student success programs by a Guided Pathway model that will engage students in K-12 through college enrollment, graduation, and job placement; c) Development and implementation of highquality and accessible learning opportunities through connecting the five campus centers to the main campus through learning hubs increasing access for secondary and post-secondary students; d) Development and implementation of evidence-based strategies to promote rural students' workforce readiness by leveraging the successful pre-apprenticeship bootcamps; and e) Implementation of a sustainability plan to ensure rural students continue to be engaged in education. Competitive Preference Priority One is addressed as the Pathway to Success project will provide support for access to technology by creating distance learning hubs at each of the five campus centers providing easier access to technology and classes as well as increasing the number of HyFlex courses allowing students to attend classes in the modality that works for them. Competitive Preference Priority Two is met in the cross-agency engagement of secondary and post-secondary education and workforce partners in the alignment of activities and educational learning outcomes to ensure participants gain the skills needed for high-demand, well-paying careers that support the local economy.

Central Wyoming College (WY) P116W210063, \$1,235,778.00, in partnership with Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, local and regional economic development agencies, the state and tribal departments of vocal rehabilitation, school districts, the transportation authority, and social services proposes to establish the *Extending Impact: Postsecondary Career Pathways through to Meaningful Employment* project. In a location where the unemployment rate can reach 84% for certain populations, Central Wyoming College (CWC) is determined to be a part of the revitalization of a rapidly changing, rural, economy. As a small 4-year community college, CWC has never been in a position to develop and support a formal career service function and, frankly, the previously plentiful jobs in the extraction industries helped mask the need for this service. However, with the world-wide decline in demand for oil, gas, coal and other minerals and, in remote communities such as ours, career services have become a critical link between education and the diversified and emerging work opportunities all around us. The target population of the project are the geographically isolated student population of the college, serving over 2,000 students annually. This project will develop a system for symbiotic employer-college relations where the students learn more than can be replicated in the classroom and the employers have the opportunity to shape the incoming workforce. Specifically, the project will infuse career services throughout college operations, including advising, success coaching, faculty development of curriculum and co-curricular activities, as well as job placement networks. Most importantly, the project will create a system to support an ongoing menu of work-based experiences for students and faculty to use to maximize learning and employability. The project will also remove barriers to college completion through access to, and connections with, outside resources for such things as childcare, transportation, food security, and finally, to good jobs. The anticipated results are to: (1) Increase the number of students enrolled in career terminal programs from 596 to 620, and therefore, more students will elect to attend college who would have not done so otherwise; (2) At least 25% of students will receive career guidance through the career services program, and therefore, students will have access to critical information that will guide their educational experience towards emerging and existing job and career opportunities that align with their personal needs and goals to include wage outlook, work experience and the nature of the work, and workplace expectations; (3) At least 50% of graduates annually will receive services through the career services program, and therefore, graduates will be able to seek direct assistance in preparing job applications and in seeking employment appropriate to their degree; (4) At least 100 students in terminal career technical degree programs (not intending to transfer) such as certificates, associates, and bachelor of applied science degrees will complete their programs annually, and therefore, students will have access to personalized counseling throughout their programs to help them connect their formal coursework to potential careers; (5) Increase access to work experiences connected to the curriculum during students' academic programs so at least 125 students participate in a work experience as part of their academic program, and therefore, students will be able to learn about potential careers through real-world experience and develop their resumes for future job applications; and (6) Increase employment of graduates in Wyoming to at least 50%, and therefore, more graduates will have an easier path toward a career in their chosen field here in Wyoming. The project meets the Competitive Preference Priorities through the creation of a Technology for the New Workplace course to help students who enter college deficient in technological skills by providing individualize support. Furthermore, the project proposes the creation of a Career Services Liaison position which is charged with cultivating networks of employers who understand both the value of college student work experiences and how to integrate them into their workplaces to maximize benefit to the company as well as the student.

Colby Community College (KS) P116W210073, \$1,231,422.00, in partnership with fourteen school districts in its service area proposes to establish the *Raising Rural Grain and More— Rural Student Success at Colby Community College* project. The target population is rural students at Colby Community College. The project meets all 5 subcomponents of the Absolute Priority and provided the NCES rural locale codes for the 14 counties they serve. The project seeks to establish the Guided Pathways for meta-majors; Implementing holistic advising and TouchPoints; Revising its First Year Experience; Providing Hot Spots for Internet connectivity; Strengthening its student management and scheduling systems and upgrading facilities for professional development and technologybased teaching. The anticipated outcomes are the number of rural students served by direct student services supported by the grant will increase from 2,857 to 3,308; The annual enrollment will increase from 2,857 to 3,308 and increase of 15.8%; The number of rural students served by direct student services supported by the grant who transfer to a four-year institution will increase from 426 to 662 and the number who obtain a degree or certificate of completion will increase from 1,209 to 1,985; and The number of rural students served by the program who obtain a paid internship, apprenticeship, or employment will increase from 0 to 75 4 CCC will partner with Kansas State University for the purpose of meeting the articulation and transfer model absolute priority. The project will address Competitive Preference Priority # 1 by CCC plans to help support students in their access to technology through the purchase of 400 hotspots, which will be loaned to students who live in areas of the service region that have either limited or poor-quality Internet connectivity and providing opportunities for hybrid vcourses. The project will address Competitive Preference Priority # 2. CCC leverages the success of rural students by working with its entire community and service region: government workforce entities, the K-12 system, sister four-year colleges, business and industry, healthcare, and the non-profit sector.