



Ascendium Invests \$15.6M in Grants on Degree Completion, Apprenticeship Strategy, Rural Learner Research and More

Ascendium has approved \$15.6 million for 18 new grants focused on a range of subjects, including degree completion, apprenticeship strategy, postsecondary education in prison and the unique needs of rural learners. All are focused on our mission of helping more people from low-income backgrounds reach their academic and career goals. Read on for highlights of the promising new efforts we're supporting.

[Read more...](#)



Take a Tour of AscendiumPhilanthropy.org with Rebecca Villarreal

Ascendium awards millions of grant dollars each year to grant partners across the country. These partners share our goal of changing postsecondary education and workforce training systems so that more learners from low-income backgrounds can achieve educational and career success. We're committed to being open and transparent about our grantmaking strategy and invite you to join Rebecca Villarreal, director – education philanthropy, as she guides readers through our website ascendiumphilanthropy.org to learn more about our grantmaking. [Watch the video...](#)



Ascendium Gifts Foster Better Lives in Our Local Communities in 2021

In addition to our national philanthropy strategy, Ascendium supports nonprofit organizations in the communities where our employees live and work. Last year, Ascendium's employees donated over 7,000 hours of their time directly helping nonprofit organizations. This was done through our employee giving program, Ascendium Cares, which includes employee time spent volunteering through paid volunteer time off, as well as their volunteer hours outside of work. Ascendium also donated more than \$1.3 million to education and workforce training nonprofit organizations in our communities through a variety of grants and giving initiatives.

Additional Ascendium News



[Open Campus Launches Efforts to Cover Key Topics in Postsecondary Education](#)



[Insights about Rural Institutions, Learners and Communities Uncovered by Digging Through the Data](#)

Address Change

Ascendium is moving! For the last year and a half, we've been building a new corporate headquarters in Madison, Wisconsin. This new facility allows us to better fulfill our vision of elevating opportunity for all by increasing our ability to collaborate with and serve our diverse partners.

As of Jan. 31, 2022, the following is our new address:

Ascendium Education Group, Inc. & Affiliates
38 Buttonwood Court
Madison, WI 53718

Our other contact information, including phone numbers and email addresses, isn't changing. If you have any questions about our address change, please let us know.

New Resources

As a result of our grantmaking, many informative resources are created by our grant partners. New resources are published to our [Resource Library](#) often. Click each link to access the new resources grant partners have shared over the past month.

- [Building Transfer and Career Pathways with Erica Orians and Lia Wetzstein \(Part VII\) \(Rural Matters\)](#)
- [The Landscape of Higher Education in Prison 2019-2020](#) (Alliance for Higher Education in Prison)
- [National Directory of Higher Education in Prison Programs](#) (Alliance for Higher Education in Prison)
- [Who Is a First-Generation Student?](#) (The Chronicle of Higher Education)

Recent Grants

Remove Structural Barriers to Success

[Strengthening Implementation of Equitable Placement Policy Reform at Community Colleges](#)
Campaign for College Opportunity | \$650,000 | 12/2021 - 12/2023

This grant supports Campaign for College Opportunity in strengthening implementation of equitable math placement policy to increase student success and close racial/ethnic equity gaps for learners in California.

[Paving the Way to Equitable, Adequate, and Effective Community College Funding](#)
Teachers College, Columbia University | \$742,100 | 12/2021 - 12/2024

This grant supports the Community College Research Center (CCRC) at Teachers College, Columbia University, in executing a project designed to understand the costs of implementing evidence-based practices to support postsecondary success for learners from low-income backgrounds and students of color at two-year institutions. CCRC will use insights from the study to provide guidance to institutional leaders and state and system policymakers for advancing adequate and equitable funding strategies.

Streamline Key Learner Transitions

[Examining Faculty Decision-Making in Course Equivalency and Transfer](#)
MDRC | \$1,122,000 | 12/2021 - 12/2024

This grant supports MDRC in assessing faculty behavior and motivations related to course equivalency decisions, a key bottleneck in the transfer process. In partnership with the National Association of System Heads and UC Berkeley, MDRC will conduct research and analysis of faculty's role in transfer articulation processes and explore system-level policy and practice considerations which may support more effective faculty engagement.

Expand Postsecondary Education in Prison

[Understanding Educational Space Needs in Prisons](#)
Ithaka Harbors Inc | \$550,000 | 12/2021 - 12/2023

This grant supports Ithaka S+R in exploring intersections of postsecondary education in prison and physical space constraints that impact educational programming in prisons. The goal of the project is to conduct research, develop policy recommendations and design solutions that will allow prisons to maximize access to high-quality postsecondary education programming.

[Support Rural Postsecondary Education and Workforce Training](#)
Leveraging Arkansas Community Colleges to Support Economic Development
Local Initiatives Support Corporation | \$240,000 | 12/2021 - 05/2023

This grant supports Rural Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) in providing technical assistance to the Arkansas Association of Community Colleges to help their 22 institutions statewide serve as leaders for regional workforce development partnerships.

[Landscape Scan on the Role of Intermediaries in Rural Communities](#)
Education First | \$150,000 | 12/2021 - 07/2022

This grant supports Education First in completing a landscape scan to identify intermediaries positioned to serve learners from low-income backgrounds across geographies, with a special focus on identifying providers in rural communities.

[Evaluating the HBCU Adult Learner Initiative](#)
UNCF | \$74,000 | 12/2021 - 12/2023

This grant supports UNCF in evaluating the Adult Learner Initiative, an initiative designed to help five Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in North Carolina identify and eliminate barriers that prevent Black rural adult learners from low-income backgrounds from earning a degree or credential.

On the Go: Find Ascendium Staff in the Field

Ascendium is committed to the safety of our staff and will continue to monitor and follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's guidance regarding travel. We look forward to seeing you at upcoming virtual and in-person events.

Association of American Colleges & Universities 2022 Annual Meeting: Educating for Democracy
Washington, D.C./Virtual
January 19 - 21, 2022

DREAM 2022: Virtual Achieving the Dream Annual Convening
February 14 - 17, 2022

Virtual National Skills Coalition 2022 Skills Summit
February 15 - 17, 2022

 **National Institute for the Study of Transfer Students: From Moment to Movement: Shaping the Future of Transfer**
Virtual: February 2 - 4, 2022, St. Louis, MO
Virtual: February 23 - 24, 2022

- Carolynn Lee, co-presenter, "History Has Its Eyes on Transfer: National Perspectives on Current and Emerging Transfer Reform Efforts"

SXSW EDU 2022
Austin, TX
March 7 - 10, 2022

- Rebecca Villarreal, moderator, "Data Innovation: Bridging Gaps & Building Capacity"

Association for Public Policy Analysis & Management's 2021 Fall Conference (postponed from Nov. 11-13, 2021)
Austin, TX
March 27 - 29, 2022

- Carolynn Lee, discussant, "College Transfer: Barriers, Policy and Technology Solutions"

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