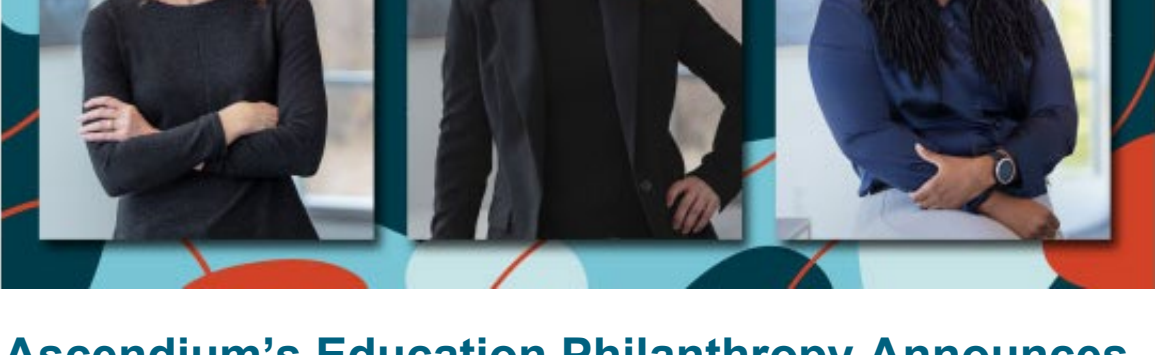




What We Have Learned — and Still Need to Learn — About Sectoral Training Programs

Sectoral training programs can be effective in addressing the needs of both employers and learners. However, there are still big questions about what aspects of these programs work best, and for whom. Over the coming months, Ascendium will draw on insights from a recent convening of leading researchers, our current investments, and the field to explore future investments focused on advancing evidence on the conditions and mechanisms needed to deliver and scale high-quality sectoral training programs. [Read more...](#)



Ascendium’s Education Philanthropy Announces Strategic Promotions to Elevate Impact

Ascendium is pleased to announce the promotions of three internal team members. In their new roles, Deputy Director of Learning and Impact Jessa Valentine, Senior Program Officer of Strategic Engagement Amy Kuether, and Program Officer Ashley Parker will propel new and ongoing initiatives. These organizational changes signal Ascendium’s commitment to the evolving needs of learners from low-income backgrounds. [Read more...](#)

New Resources

Our grant partners regularly create resources that benefit organizations focused on student success. These resources are published to our [Resource Library](#) often; here’s what’s new this month.

- [Accelerated Courses at Tennessee Community Colleges](#) (The College System of Tennessee)
- [Beyond Access: Advancing Racial Equity and Inclusion in Prison Education Programs](#) (Vera Institute of Justice)
- [Community College Bachelor’s Degrees in Texas: A First Look at Enrollment and Outcomes](#) (New America)
- [Participation & Outcomes in SUNY College-in-Prison Programs](#) (The Research Foundation for SUNY)

Recent Grants

Remove Structural Barriers to Success

Ohio Strong Start in Science (OhioSSS)

Ohio Department of Higher Education | \$3,000,000 | 03/2024 - 02/2028

This grant supports the Ohio Department of Higher Education in designing and implementing a corequisite model for entry-level science courses at 17 colleges and universities. Redesign efforts will focus on courses with disproportionately high failure rates for learners from low-income backgrounds, women, and learners of color who are underrepresented in high-demand STEM career fields.

Fast Track to Success? A Mixed Methods Study of Accelerated Course Formats

Evaluation and Assessment Solutions for Education LLC | \$160,800 | 12/2022 - 11/2024

This grant supports Evaluation and Assessment Solutions for Education LLC in better understanding the impact of accelerated courses on the academic success of learners from low-income and other non-traditional backgrounds.

Talent Strong Texas Pathways for Multilingual Learners of English

Texas Community College Education Initiative | \$3,000,000 | 02/2024 - 12/2027

This grant supports the Texas Community College Education Initiative in aligning pathways from English as a Second Language (ESL) programs to community college credentials, including industry-based certifications, vocational certificates, and academic degrees. Texas community colleges will address placement and curricular structures that have been barriers to success for multilingual learners of English seeking to transition from ESL to workforce training or academic programs.

Streamline Key Learner Transitions

Tools of the Trade Evaluation

Mathematica Inc | \$1,499,700 | 02/2024 - 01/2029

This grant supports Mathematica in conducting an evaluation that supports iterative improvements to the Tools of the Trade Scholarship Program to maximize the difference the scholarship makes for Wisconsin apprentices seeking upward mobility.

Learning Partner for Future Sectoral Training Evidence-Building Initiative

MDRC | \$334,500 | 02/2024 - 06/2024

This grant supports MDRC in partnering with Ascendium to design a grantmaking initiative that will build next-generation evidence on sectoral training programs. The initiative will identify the conditions and mechanisms needed to deliver and scale effective programs.

Exploring Innovative Financing to Strengthen Pre-Apprenticeships, Creating Rural Talent Finance Partnerships, and Establishing the Social Finance Institute

Social Finance Inc | \$6,014,000 | 01/2024 - 12/2027

This grant supports Social Finance in piloting innovative workforce training financing models to improve labor market outcomes for learners from low-income backgrounds. Social Finance will design models leveraging outcomes-based funding structures in two areas: (1) to support learners in accessing and succeeding in pre-apprenticeships and (2) to catalyze training programs within specific industry sectors critical to rural workforce needs. Social Finance will also launch the Social Finance Institute as a hub for dissemination of insights from these and other initiatives, with a focus on informing public and private leaders about strategies to build sustainable and inclusive talent development pipelines.

Support Rural Postsecondary Education and Workforce Training

Supporting Competency-Based Teacher Education in Tennessee

University of Tennessee | \$1,838,160 | 12/2023 - 12/2025

This grant supports the University of Tennessee's Grow Your Own Center in enabling postsecondary institutions to launch competency-based teacher apprenticeship programs that reach rural regions and learners throughout the state. Through the launch of the Institute for Competency-Based Teacher Education, postsecondary institutions will have access to standardized, competency-based materials and assessments that will ensure more rural learners can engage in and complete apprenticeship-based degree programs that provide a pathway to teaching jobs in rural school districts.

Rural Regional Talent Networks (R-RTN) Cohort 2 Implementation

Economic Mobility Systems | \$1,080,000 | 11/2023 - 06/2026

This grant supports Economic Mobility Systems in expanding the Rural Regional Talent Network (R-RTN) model to three additional rural communities in Texas. The grant will support the creation of new partnerships between K-12, community colleges, and employers focused on using data to align policy and practice across sectors in order to ensure rural learners are accessing and completing high-quality training that leads to in-demand jobs.

On the Go: Find Ascendium Staff in the Field

We look forward to seeing you at upcoming virtual and in-person events.

Workforce Matters: Further Together: Advancing Equity Through Workforce Philanthropy

Alexandria, VA
April 2-4, 2024

- Kirstin Yeado, panelist, “Supporting Self-Determination in Native Nations and Indian Country”

The Wharton School: The Business Case for Second Chance Employment Conference

Philadelphia, PA
April 4, 2024

American Association of Community Colleges: Annual Conference: Racing Toward a Better Future

Louisville, KY
April 5-9, 2024

Correctional Education Association: 2024 Forum

Addison, TX
April 7-9, 2024

ASU + GSV Summit: Here Comes the Sun

San Diego, CA
April 14-17, 2024

The Council for the Study of Community Colleges: 65th Annual Conference

Pittsburgh, PA
April 18-20, 2024

- Keith Witham, presenter, “Foundation Leaders Discuss Funding Strategies for Community College Researchers”

ABFE: 2024 Annual Harambee Conference

St. Louis, MO
April 25-27, 2024

Partners for Rural Impact: Rural Summit 2024

Lexington, KY
April 29-May 1, 2024

National Skills Coalition: Skills Summit

Washington, DC
May 13-15, 2024

Grantmakers for Effective Organizations: 2024 National Conference

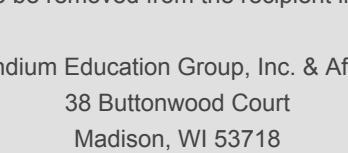
Los Angeles, CA
May 20-24, 2024

Tennessee Higher Education Initiative: She Changes Everything Conference

Nashville, TN
May 23, 2024

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