



### Resources Help Rural Community Colleges in Aftermath of COVID-19 Health Crisis

Rural community colleges are facing many challenges in the aftermath of the COVID-19 health crisis and Ascendium grant partners are helping meet them. The National Center for Inquiry & Improvement is producing a series of briefs to help colleges strengthen their ability to provide regional stability and upward mobility for their students. The Foundation for Maine's Community Colleges is working to train rural Maine residents for well-paying remote work careers. [Read more...](#)



### An Interest in Innovation: New Grants Explore Non-Traditional Models

Ascendium recently made three new grants to explore non-traditional models designed to increase credential completion, employment outcomes and wages for low-income workers. These innovative models each provide critical student success and job coaching supports and employer connections but differ in the ways they work with postsecondary institutions. This is all in support of our focus area to streamline key learner transitions. Through these investments, we hope more learners from low-income backgrounds can find pathways for socioeconomic mobility. [Read more...](#)

### Keith Witham Named Ascendium's New Deputy Director - Education Grantmaking

Ascendium welcomes Keith Witham as our new Deputy Director - Education Grantmaking. He will provide day-to-day thought partnership and support to program officers across Ascendium's four focus areas to maximize the impact of investments that support learners from low-income backgrounds. [Read more...](#)



## Resources

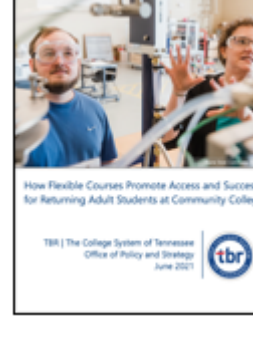
#### From Crisis to Recovery: Federal, State, and Institutional Recommendations for Higher Education

The State Higher Education Executive Officers Association and New America partnered to develop a greater understanding of how the shift to remote teaching and learning impacted marginalized students. **This report**, developed with support from Ascendium, is aimed towards federal, state and institutional policymakers and provides recommendations to ensure a robust recovery as learning transitions back to in-person.



#### How Flexible Courses Promote Access and Success for Returning Adult Students at Community Colleges

The Tennessee Board of Regents - The College System of Tennessee, supported by Ascendium, launched Pathways to Success for Students with Some College, No Degree, a TBR project focused on paving the path to success for returning adult students at the state's community and technical colleges. **This working paper** presents evidence that flexibility in course scheduling, locations and modality results in increased course success rates for returning adult students.



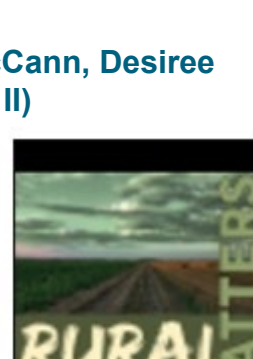
#### Rural Community College Leader Series

The COVID-19 health crisis hit rural community colleges hard, but leadership at those institutions quickly began to focus on solutions. The Rural Leader Learning Community, created by the National Center for Inquiry & Improvement and funded by Ascendium, developed **a series of briefs** that explore how rural community colleges can best support learners from low-income backgrounds after the COVID-19 health crisis.



#### Rural Higher Education & Student Voice with Meghan McCann, Desiree Jones-Smith, William Hendon and Matthew Vishino (Part II)

The second in an eight-part series from Rural Matters and sponsored by Ascendium, **this episode** includes a discussion on how to best support rural learners using insight gained from a recent Education Commission of the States report and through the Aspen Rural Community College Success Initiative. Two community college students also share how postsecondary education has transformed their lives.



## Recent Grants

### Expand Postsecondary Education in Prison

#### Massachusetts Prison Education Consortium Expansion

Scaling

**The Educational Justice Institute at MIT | \$810,700 | 07/2021 - 06/2024**

This grant supports The Educational Justice Institute at MIT in designing a scalable, sustainable and replicable model of postsecondary education delivery through the Massachusetts prison system. This secondary will educate delinquent courses offered throughout the correctional system into a coordinated network of transferable credits, guide students through facility transfers and create comprehensive programs leading to credentials.

## On the Go: Find Ascendium Staff in the Field

Ascendium is committed to the safety of our staff. We continue to monitor and follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's guidance regarding the COVID-19 health crisis and safety protocol for travel and in-person events. We will continue to support and attend virtual events but look forward to opportunities in August and beyond to connect in-person.

#### 🔗 **GlobalMindED: 2021 Virtual Conference**

April 1 - July 30, 2021

#### 🔗 **GSV Ventures: ASU+GSV Summit**

San Diego, CA / Virtual

August 9 - 11, 2021

#### 🔗 **Council for Opportunity in Education: 40th Annual Conference**

Atlanta, GA

September 12 - 15, 2021

#### 🔗 **Rural Community College Alliance: Annual Live RCCA Conference 2021**

Hickory, NC

September 22 - 24, 2021

#### **SREE: The Fierce Urgency of Knowledge: Education Evidence for Reimagining and Reckoning 2021 Conference**

Arlington, VA

September 26 - 29, 2021

#### 🔗 **NCAN: Rebuilding for Postsecondary Equity Virtual Conference**

October 5 - 7, 2021

- October 7, 2021

Kirstin Yeado, presenter, "Using Data Visualization Tools to Understand and Support Rural Learners and Rural Postsecondary Institutions"

#### **National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition: Virtual National Conference on Students in Transition**

October 11 - 13, 2021

#### 🔗 **Grantmakers for Education: A Vision for the Future of Learning & Justice**

Los Angeles, CA; Dallas, TX / Virtual

October 12-22, 2021

- October 15, 2021

"From Research to Action: Leveraging Literature Reviews to Improve Grantmaking"

- October 20, 2021

Sue Cui, presenter, "Effective Design and Management of Large-Scale Postsecondary Reform"

- October 21, 2021

"What Can the Prison Classroom Teach Colleges and Universities?"

🔗 = Ascendium is a proud sponsor