

Request for Proposal: Using Data in a Changing Postsecondary Landscape

To effectively serve their diverse student populations and support relevant programs, rigorous data analysis and access to quality data is essential for professionals at institutions offering postsecondary career and technical education (CTE). Student-level data can help institutional leadership determine funding and educational priorities and can also be utilized by system administrators and legislators for resource allocation. For example, better understanding of disaggregated student-level data has helped institutions unearth the number of [single mothers in postsecondary education](#) and understand the number of students [lacking basic needs](#), such as housing and food security. These discoveries have led to some institutions offering greater access to [childcare](#), [affordable campus housing](#), and [food pantries](#). Institutions have also used data to better align their program offerings with local industries to ensure strong labor market outcomes for both the student and employer.

CTE programs are among the most diverse programs at postsecondary institutions, and students who enroll in subbaccalaureate CTE credential programs tend to be disproportionately [older](#), [racially diverse](#), and [first-generation](#) when compared to their peers in liberal arts subbaccalaureate programs and bachelor's degree programs. The number of postsecondary CTE programs are also growing, and in the previous decade, the number of students earning subbaccalaureate credentials in CTE fields [rose 71 percent](#), and [90 percent](#) of all Title IV-eligible postsecondary institutions offer career education. Despite this growth, important questions related to serving diverse student populations, the benefits of stackable credentials, and the quality of non-credit courses remain unanswered.

As programmatic offerings and student needs continue to evolve, institutions will need to better understand how to best serve the changing face of postsecondary education. Data professionals at institutions offering postsecondary CTE programs are well positioned to identify trends, analyze student and workforce needs, and strategize how to best serve their student body. Unfortunately, for many data professionals there are limited opportunities to pursue professional development specific to CTE. Understanding how to effectively conduct compliance reporting and utilize IPEDS data are essential tasks for data professionals on college campuses; however, professional development overly focused on compliance can limit innovation and proper guidance on how to best serve students attending institutions offering postsecondary CTE programs.

ECMC Foundation believes that as postsecondary CTE continues to include a broader diversity of programs and students, colleges need thought leaders who can use data to transform their institutions. Providing these leaders with increased support and professional development could lead to adjustments to resource allocation and improved outcomes for students in postsecondary CTE programs and, in turn, a larger, more diverse population earning a family sustaining wage.

Background

[ECMC Foundation](#) is a Los Angeles-based, nationally-focused foundation whose mission is to inspire and to facilitate improvements that affect educational outcomes—especially among underserved populations—through evidence-based innovation.

The Foundation makes investments in two focus areas:

- College Success is focused on increasing the number of college students from historically underrepresented backgrounds, including low-income and first-generation populations, who pursue and attain bachelor's degrees.
- Career Readiness is committed to connecting adults with limited or no education beyond high school to postsecondary CTE programs that are part of career pathways leading to portable certificates or degrees.

CTE Leadership Collaborative

This RFP is being released as part of the ECMC Foundation [CTE Leadership Collaborative](#) (LC), an initiative focused on bringing together diverse perspectives and equipping leaders with the tools, resources and skills needed to advance postsecondary CTE. LC grantees commit to similar branding and a common list of expectations focused on field-building to create seamless opportunities for collaboration.

The partner selected for this opportunity will join a community of organizations supporting leaders with the intent to improve the state of postsecondary CTE. Please see below for a brief summary of the first two grants made through the LC.

- The CTE Research Program at North Carolina State University - Sponsored by ECMC Foundation advances CTE research and knowledge by supporting graduate students and postdoctoral researchers from a range of postsecondary institutions and a variety of academic disciplines. The goal is to grow high-quality postsecondary CTE research, which currently lacks significant visibility and financial support.
- The Postsecondary Leadership Success Program at ACTE - Sponsored by ECMC Foundation supports current and aspiring leaders in CTE. The goal is to provide professional and career growth opportunities to the next generation of leaders at nonprofits and postsecondary institutions offering CTE programs.

Opportunity

ECMC Foundation is accepting proposals from organizations or institutions interested in developing and managing a program to support data professionals working at institutions offering postsecondary career and technical education programs. This competitive grant process will lead to the identification of one organization or self-identified coalition of organizations to receive funding.

Proposed concepts should include a plan to recruit and select program participants, offer innovative programming to build a community of practice among participants, and provide ongoing support for professionals seeking to advance in their career and/or refine their skills. The ideal program will engage participants throughout their involvement, allow for the exchange of ideas, and offer mentorship opportunities. Proposals should indicate the number and size of cohort(s) to be assembled, if teams from individual campuses or districts should be considered, and the experience level appropriate for the program participants. ECMCF will provide financial support to the selected organization to pay for management of the program, as well as pass-through funds for program participants, the use of which should clearly be articulated in the proposal.

Grant activities should not start before November 2019 or end after October 2022.

ECMC Foundation believes that a successful program will include the following activities in an effort to develop the individuals as leaders and advance the postsecondary CTE field.

- Support the development and publication of written pieces;
- Offer skill building and networking opportunities;
- Attend a yearly ECMC Foundation convening;
- Encourage attendance and presentations at relevant conferences;
- Make any produced research, data, or publications open access.

Eligibility

Any organization or institution with a commitment to postsecondary education, professional development, and/or background in leadership development is eligible to submit a Letter of Inquiry.

Timeline

The deadline to apply is 5:00 PM (PT) on June 5, 2019. Final notifications will be issued no later than June 17, 2019. The organization selected will be asked to submit a full proposal (including a detailed action plan and budget) to ECMC Foundation by July 16, 2019.

Submission Process

In order to be considered for this opportunity, interested organizations must submit a Letter of Inquiry via ECMC Foundation's [online form](#).

Selection Criteria

A small team from the Foundation will evaluate all submitted Letters of Inquiry. The team will select the organization with the strongest mission alignment and ability to accomplish the expectations established by ECMC Foundation.

Contact

Questions may be directed to Patrick Bourke (pbourke@ecmc.org).

Using Data in a Changing Postsecondary Landscape Letters of Inquiry

Please address the following questions and submit your answers via the [online form](#).

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|-------------------|--|
| Organization Name | |
| Program Title | |
| Program Duration | |
| Requested Amount | |

Organization (character limit: 2000)

Provide an overview of your organization's purpose, relevant history, and data on its effectiveness.

- Does your organization have experience facilitating similar programs and how successful have those initiatives been?
- How do the goals of the RFP align with the overall mission of your organization?

Proposed Program (character limit: 4500)

Explain how you will help data professionals at institutions offering postsecondary CTE programs better understand the needs on their campuses and how to use and collect data to improve services and programs for their students.

- What supports will your organization offer that will prepare data professionals to more effectively serve their institution on CTE-related topics?
- How will you provide professional development to individuals that have time constraints and numerous compliance requirements?
- How will you utilize the pass-through grant funds? (e.g., unrestricted funding to participants, special project support)

Program Timeline and Action Plan (character limit: 4500)

Provide the approximate start and end dates and a summary of the activities for which you are requesting support.

- What actions will you take over the course of the grant period to identify and support program participants?
- How will you develop the leadership capabilities and build community among participants?
- How will you incorporate the activities listed in the Opportunity section above?

Measurements of Success (character limit: 2250)

Explain how you will evaluate the program's success and measure successful implementation and program effectiveness.

Budget Narrative (character limit: 1250)

Include a detailed list of the expenses (e.g., staff time, professional development) that comprise the total amount requested.

Disclaimer

ECMC Foundation reserves the right, where it may serve the Foundation's best interests, to request additional information or clarification from candidates or to allow corrections for errors or omissions. There is no expressed or implied obligation for ECMC Foundation to reimburse responding firms for any expenses incurred in preparing submissions in response to this request.