Technology & Partnerships for Transfer Success
Request for Proposals

The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) can provide two-year capacity-building grants to accredited colleges and universities to develop and implement technological solutions that result in targeted and real-time solutions that improve transfer student outcomes and metrics.

WICHE seeks to support up to six institutional partnerships that will work together to develop relevant technology improvements and pilot them in their settings. These partners will focus on specific transfer student populations that are important in their transfer student flows, prototype and test tools that they would want to be implemented in their information systems, and provide critical information to advisors and students to enable the successful transfer of credits and progress through major coursework at the receiving institution. We look forward to receiving your application, which can be accessed online, by 11:00 p.m. MST on Sunday, March 31, 2024.

Please send any questions to Olivia Tufo, otufo@wiche.edu, or call 303-541-0261.

WHO	• Key transfer-focused staff, registrars, and IT representatives knowledgeable about course transcripting and information from accredited community colleges and universities • All institutional dyads must confirm support from senior leadership at both institutions

WHAT	• Financial support to improve or implement technology that specifically supports successful transfer pathways between two institutions (dyads) that have a proven need for technological solutions to address a significant transfer student population between their institutions.
	• **Each institutional dyad will receive up to $30,000 each for their specified technology development needs.**
	• Activities required as part of participation:
	    ○ Quarterly community of practice (virtual/remote) participation, facilitated by WICHE, to exchange examples and information amongst each other and providing WICHE the opportunity to cull and summarize collective learnings for the field about possible technological approaches to transfer student support and curriculum mapping.
	    ○ Demonstrable technology improvement or addition
	    ○ Upon the conclusion of Spring Semester 2026, institution dyads will report results of their technology enhancements, student transfer success outcomes, and student and institution financial impacts.

WHEN	• Participation from April 2024 to October 2026 • Quarterly virtual Community of Practice meetings • Spring Semester 2025: Initial installation of the technology improvement and cost savings methodology are available for use, testing and tracking • WICHE site visits in Year Two (2025)
WHERE	• No travel required
WHY	• There is an ongoing need for innovation, improvement, and the removal of impediments to successful student transfer—particularly technological advancements that address information gaps for students and academic advisors.

Purpose Statement

WICHE acknowledges that once institutions have entered in transfer agreements a key and minimally necessary next step to enable seamless transfer is having technology in place to efficiently 'send' the eligible credits and have them codified as accepted by the receiving institution. While much has been done to produce credit transfer agreements (articulation agreements), there is an ongoing need for innovation, improvement and the removal of impediments to successful student transfer—particularly technological advancements that address information gaps for students and counselors.

WICHE continues to hear ongoing demand for resources and information to continue work towards transfer innovation. For example:

- Private institutions still typically lack the scaled transfer agreements and mechanisms that have become more common with public postsecondary institutions.
- While initiatives like Interstate Passport demonstrates the potential of seamlessly transferrable *lower-division* credits, many *majors* require specific lower-division courses or electives to prepare a student for a concentrated or intensive major (for example, more scientifically-oriented general education math courses might be needed to qualify a student for an electrical engineering major).
- Persistent lack of information for originating colleges about student outcomes after arrival at the transfer destination college.
- Similar needs for streamlining credit transfer are being raised in conjunction with the growing movement for microcredentialing, credit for prior learning, and stackable credentials.

There remains a robust expressed need for work to advance transfer. The complexities of transfer remain a perennial issue despite recent progress on articulating credit, in no small part because students attempting to transfer represents the 'messy reality' that students need flexible on-and-off-ramp opportunities for getting postsecondary education while they progress through life, while at the same time, institutions need to ensure quality and be able to operate at scale.

WICHE wishes for these funds to support hands-on transfer advising and transfer assistance through the development and implementation of technology solutions that get the needed correct and real-time information into the hands of counselors, advisors, and students to increase the rates at which transfer students successfully proceed through major coursework and towards completion.

General Information

Who May Apply

The request for proposals is open to any non-profit public or private WICHE-region accredited institution located in Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawai'i, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, and the U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States (i.e., the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands). Individuals in any role at an institution may submit an application and act as institutional liaison to WICHE during the project.

We seek institutional dyads with the following qualities:

1. Demonstrated demand for upward transfer, based on data about existing rates of transfer;
2. High rates of transfer between the dyad institutions, with a preference for focus on improving transfer in majors that have lower rates of transfer success and/or have greater curricular complexity;
3. Partnerships and approaches that address key impediments to transfer students enrolling and progressing in major coursework, including for example: curriculum mapping across institutions, providing real-time information to advisors and students that supports hands-on transfer advising, approaches that enable the 'backward' exchange of information about transfer students' success at the destination college, to the originating college;
4. The existence of transfer advising and assistance staff and services that the developed curriculum mapping tools will support.
5. Demonstrated readiness to develop and implement the proposed technology improvement within one year

Examples of Projects

Examples of the kinds of tools and products that WICHE seeks to fund may include:

- Curriculum mapping analytical tools/resources to evaluate and address curricular complexity and impediments to transfer student success
- A tool that helps calculate tuition savings from reduced curricular complexity and increased credit transfer
- Prototyped methods for institutions to enhance their student information and customer relationship management systems to efficiently deploy needed information and support transfer advising activities

Project outcomes include these metrics, which will be measured and reported by the participating transfer dyads (and compared to benchmarks reported during the application process):

- Reducing educational expenses by minimizing or eliminating credit loss during transfer
- Curricular structures that result in improved student retention in specific programs
- Increased term-to-term persistence and progress through major studies after transferring, and as possible within the term of the grant, improved rates of completion rates for transfer students, with equal attention to the increased transfer success among students of color and students from low-income backgrounds.

Award Amount

Each institutional dyad may apply for up to $30,000 each for their specified technology development and customization needs and/or to receive technology developer consultant funds.

Important: The sub granted funds must be used to fund technology development, prototyping and implementation, and not to fund project management, institution staff not specifically involved in technology development or deployment, or student advising or support services.

How to Apply

Applications must include:

1. A description of the specific issue or transfer success impediment that the proposed technology improvement will address, the transfer student populations to be focused on, and ability to support and sustain institutional participation in the project and make progress on technology development during the two-year project.
2. A description of the proposed technology improvement, and plans and capacity to develop and implement the first installation of the technology improvement, within the first 12 months of the grant.
3. A description of how the proposed technology improvement will lead to: reduced educational expenses by minimizing or eliminating credit loss during transfer; Curricular structures that result in improved student retention in specific programs; Increased term-to-term persistence and progress through major studies after transferring (and as possible within the term of the grant, improved rates of completion rates for transfer students), with equal attention to the increased transfer success among students of color and students from low-income backgrounds. And, the plan for monitoring and reporting progress metrics.
4. A statement of support from a member of the president's or chancellor's cabinet or council of both institutions in the dyad, including a commitment to the partnership, and to meet the obligations of the subgrant;
5. A budget and description of how up to $30,000 will be used to accomplish the proposed technology improvement.

While not required, strong applications will include:

1. Overall feasibility of the dyads' proposed plans for developing the curriculum mapping tools, including the likelihood of the institutions' student information system (SIS) and customer relationship management (CRM) systems to be enhanced for the needed transfer curriculum mapping adjustments;
2. History and demonstrated strengths of the institutional partnership;
3. Cross-functional teams that includes relevant staff from both institutions, including: at least one key transfer-focused staff from both the community college and four-year institution, registrars and IT representatives knowledgeable about course transcripting and information system processes, transfer advisors or staff providing transfer assistance, faculty from each institution, and other relevant stakeholders.
4. A description of how this improvement will be sustained beyond the grant term, and how it will result in improved longer-term outcomes such as transfer student completion.

Number of Awards

We seek up to six community college-university transfer dyad partnerships that are in a position to improve or implement a technology approach to support ongoing transfer success efforts and demonstrate related measurable transfer student outcomes during a two-year project.

Selection Process

Institutions will be selected by a review committee including expertise in registration operations (registrar); SIS, IT and technology development; transfer best practices, and other relevant experts not directly associated with the oversight of this grant project.

Timeline and Institutional Responsibilities

Activities will begin in Spring 2024 and extend through October 2026 which permits for one academic year to codify, develop, and prototype the curriculum mapping technological tools and/or information system adjustments, and then begin initial implementation with advisors and students. Institutions will be encouraged to implement the technology tool/enhancements within less than a year, if they are able, which would provide a longer testing and monitoring period among a greater number of students. All six dyads will be expected to participate in quarterly community of practice calls in which the participants will share progress, problem-solving, and outcomes.

Strong proposals will include a description of how this improvement will be sustained beyond the grant term, and how it will result in improved longer-term outcomes such as transfer student completion.

Year 1: Spring and Summer Semester 2024 (January – August 2024), and Fall Semester 2024 (September-December 2024)
- Selection process
- Institution dyads will prototype the specifications and mechanics of their proposed curriculum mapping analytical needs and tools, and have a plan for implementing the technological enhancements/adjustments using the subgranted funds and/or project SIS consultant.
- Report to WICHE, data points that serve as benchmarks of the student success indicators
- Test the prototype
- Dyads will conduct a needs analysis and develop a methodology to determine cost savings.
- The community of practice will meet virtually once per semester (including the initial kick-off meeting), for facilitated learning and information activities.

Year 2: Spring and Summer Semester 2025 (January – August 2025), and Fall Semester 2025 (September – December 2025)

- Use, test and refine the initial technology enhancements for the curriculum mapping and advising needs, with students in each of the three semesters of this year
- Track students' rates of credit transfer, persistence and course progress in major studies from term to term, and observed cost savings from the methodology developed in Year 1.
- The community of practice will meet virtually once per semester
- WICHE will conduct a site visit to each of the dyads for information gathering and project management

Year 3: Spring Semester 2026 (January – May 2026) and Summer Semester 2026 (June-October 2026)

- Use, test and refine the initial technology enhancements for the curriculum mapping and advising needs, with students in the Spring semester of this year
- Track students' rates of credit transfer, persistence and course progress in major studies from term to term, and observed cost savings from the methodology developed in Year 1.
- Upon the conclusion of Spring Semester 2026, institution dyads will report results of their technology enhancements, student transfer success outcomes, and cost savings, to WICHE.
- The community of practice will meet virtually one final time for facilitated learning and

information activities, including sharing the results of their work and next steps.

- By October 31, 2026, WICHE will produce a final, actionable report of the results of the curriculum mapping efforts and their contribution to transfer student success. This report-out will include delineation of curriculum mapping adjustments that might be implemented for similar information systems at other campuses (e.g., codification of enhancements in an 'open source' form, or suggestions for enhancements from SIS vendors).

Products and Outcomes

WICHE and the participating transfer dyads will produce the following tools and products:

- Curriculum mapping analytical tools/resources to evaluate and address curricular complexity and impediments to transfer student success
- A tool that helps calculate tuition savings from reduced curricular complexity and increased credit transfer
- Prototyped methods for institutions to enhance their student information and customer relationship management systems to efficiently deploy needed information and support transfer advising activities
- Summarizing document(s) including case studies and recommendations for other institutions interested in improving advising and communication with students in transfer settings and possible approaches to curriculum mapping
- As possible, a white paper detailing specific adjustments that could be made across common information systems, to support transfer coaching

Project outcomes include these metrics, which will be measured and reported by the participating transfer dyads (and compared to benchmarks reported during the application process):

- Reducing educational expenses by minimizing or eliminating credit loss during transfer
- Curricular structures that result in improved student retention in specific programs
- Increased term-to-term persistence and progress through major studies after transferring, and as possible within the term of the grant, improved rates of completion rates for transfer students, with equal attention to the increased transfer success among students of color and students from low-income backgrounds.