2025-26 Early Adopter Advising Technology Implementation Project Grant Guidelines

The Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges reserves the right to make changes to this document due to, but not limited to, federal, state, or local legislation or policy changes.

Deadlines and Milestones

Milestones	Dates (Subject to Change)
Application available	By April 1, 2025
Informational Webinar	April 8, 2025
Applications due	May 15, 2025
Award recipients notified	By May 21, 2025
Grant start date	May 1, 2025
1st In-Person Community of Practice Meeting	June 2025
2nd In-Person Community of Practice Meeting	June 2026
All grant funds must be expended	By September 30, 2026
Colleges to submit final report	October 15, 2026

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Overview

In March 2025, Washington Association of Community and Technical Colleges (WACTC) will procure a vendor to serve as a common advising platform, supporting institutions in their Guided Pathways efforts. This tool is intended to help institutions realize

1. two-way integration with the system office (increasing access to data, and decreasing local work); and
2. a student support approach that centers students and activates commitments to equity.

The Washington Student Success Center, in support of statewide Guided Pathways reforms, invites Washington state community and technical colleges to apply for funding to accelerate preparation for and implementation of the new statewide student success and advising platform. This initiative aligns with Guided Pathways principles by streamlining student support, improving advising structures, and fostering equitable educational outcomes.

Colleges will receive a grant for approximately $45,000, technical assistance, and access to a dedicated community of practice facilitated by Jobs for the Future (JFF). JFF's mission is to drive transformation of the US education and workforce systems to achieve equitable economic advancement for all. Our goal is to align education, workforce, and employment changemakers toward a shared North Star: In 10 years, 75 million people facing systemic barriers to advancement will work in quality jobs.

Purpose

The purpose of this grant is to:
- Pilot the new statewide student success and advising platform with up to five (5) early adopter colleges
- Gather and act on students and stakeholder feedback to inform our statewide approach
- Identify and alleviate barriers to implementation at the local and state levels
- Build out processes and recommendations for implementation that support colleges in adopting the platform

Responsibilities of the College

Colleges are responsible for implementing the new tool at this institution. This process will look slightly different for each college based on local needs but will include assessing local needs, developing an understanding of current advising practices, defining a technology-enabled future state for advising, technical setup including configuration, training and professional development, and establishing a support structure for sustainability.

At a minimum, colleges must:

- Implement an individual instance of the new student success and advising platform in fall 2025 when it becomes available
- Assign a primary point person for communication and coordination of project activities with SBCTC and our technical assistant, [Jobs for the Future](). This individual should have a sophisticated understanding of their institution, current student support and guided pathways practices, the vision for future student support practices, and related technology. This skill set and experience is likely to be found in a middle- to senior-level administrator, such as an AVP, Dean, or Director. Institutional culture, size, and capacity will also influence who is most appropriate for this role.
- Establish a local team to facilitate implementation of the tool that includes representation from across college functions (including IT, academic advising, career services, transfer, financial aid, academic support, faculty, student services, and/or academic affairs leadership). Having decision-makers on the team will expedite implementation.
- Recommend a student representative to serve on a state-wide student advisory board to be made up of student representatives from across the five (5) early adopter institutions.
- Provide a letter of commitment or statement from the college President/Chancellor
- Participate in required activities including two (2) in-person meetings and quarterly virtual community of practice meetings.
- Engage in exploration and documentation of current/planned advising practices, policies, and related efforts to facilitate peer learning.
- Share basic descriptive data with the SBCTC as a member of the community of practice (enrollment, persistence, transfer, graduation, post-completion outcomes.

More About the Community of Practice (CoP)

SBCTC will collaborate with Jobs for the Future to facilitate a community of practice for grantees. This community of practice will allow state and college leaders to engage with JFF experts on ways to embrace an iterative approach and to share insights and lessons learned from their respective positions, accelerating statewide application of effective technology-enabled advising practices.

CoP topics will be determined based on early coaching calls and what is learned during the advising audit with institutional teams. Topics might include:
- Implementing new software,
- Inclusive decision-making (working across functional areas),
- Student-centered design,
- Making data actionable and iterative (creating feedback loops between policy and practice),
- Creating inclusive spaces for student co-design and shared governance, and

- Creating stronger policy and practice feedback loops between colleges and the state.

CoP sessions will also include time for peer sharing, guidance, and feedback and include student participants.

Application Guidelines

How to Apply

Colleges interested in applying must submit a completed application via email to Amunoo Tembo, *Student Success and Pathway Navigation Policy Associate*, at atembo@sbctc.edu no later than May 15, 2025.
- Late submissions will not be accepted.
- Attachments must be in Microsoft Word or PDF format. Please do not submit zipped files or other file types.

Proposal Content

At a minimum, applications should
- acknowledge and agree to the Responsibilities of the College outlined in these guidelines,
- provide contact information for key College Team members,
- include a detailed budget with a narrative explaining planned expenditures, and
- outline a timeline for implementation.

Application Review Process

All proposals meeting the minimum criteria will be evaluated by a review panel, which will assess applications based on the guidelines and recommend funding decisions to the State Board. **Colleges will be notified of their application status by May 21, 2025**.

Selection Criteria

Successful applicants will:
- Demonstrate a clear commitment to improving advising policies, processes, and student outcomes, with a particular focus on supporting students of color.
- Use a data-informed strategy, including setting and accelerating population-specific targets.
- Ensure meaningful student involvement in the design, implementation, and continuous improvement of advising initiatives.
- Show a willingness to share insights and best practices with other Washington institutions, serving as a peer leader to help develop actionable, scalable implementation models.

Priority consideration will be given based on:
- Geographic diversity
- Institution size
- Student demographics

Informational Webinar

An informational webinar will be held on Tuesday, April 8th at 11:00am for prospective applicants. Join us to learn more about the project, funding opportunity, and application process:
Date: Tuesday, April 8, 2025
Time: 11:00am -12:00pm PST
Zoom Link

Funding Overview

Each participating institution receives $45,000 to support the following activities:

- Travel to community of practice events for shared learning and collaboration
- Gathering student and stakeholder feedback to improve advising and student success initiatives
- Build-out of advising processes to enhance student support services
- Institutional capacity for data collection to inform decision-making
- Professional development for faculty, advisors, and staff

Funding for this project comes from the ECMC Foundation, a national organization committed to eliminating equity gaps in postsecondary completion by 2040.

Allowable Costs

Grant funds _MUST_ be used for:

1. **Travel**
   - College teams are required to travel to in-person **community of practice events** (locations TBD).
   - Travel-related expenses such as airfare, lodging, mileage, and meals are **allowable** when directly related to these required events.
2. **Student Compensation**
   - Grantees must **engage students in meaningful ways** to inform local implementation efforts.
   - Each college must designate a student representative to participate in the **Student Advisory Board** alongside representatives from five (5) early adopter institutions.

- Colleges **must fairly compensate students** for their participation.
    1. **State law allows student payments up to $200.00 per session per student** (with approval, higher amounts may be considered).
    2. Alternative payment methods, such as **contracts or institutional agreements**, are also available for student compensation.
    3. It is recommended that colleges **incentivize student participation** in planned surveys and feedback sessions.

Grant funds _MAY_ be used for:

1. **Support Activities**
    - **Building out advising processes** to align with statewide student success and advising reforms.
    - **Strengthening institutional capacity for data collection** and analysis related to student outcomes.
    - **Professional development** for advisors, faculty, and staff to ensure effective implementation of the new platform.
    - **Gathering student and stakeholder feedback** to refine advising practices and improve student support.
2. **Personnel & Staffing**
    - Hiring **temporary positions** (e.g., advisors, student success specialists) to support implementation.
    - Stipends for faculty and staff participating in training and advising process improvements.
3. **Professional Development & Training**
    - **Conference registration and travel** for relevant professional events (e.g., NASPA, NACADA, state-based conferences).
    - Training sessions and materials related to the advising platform.
4. **Technology, Equipment & Supplies**
    - **Equipment and supplies** directly supporting the implementation of the advising platform.
    - **Software licensing fees** for data management and student tracking tools.
5. **Consultants & Technical Assistance**
    - Fees for **consultants or technical assistance** directly related to the platform's implementation.

Key Financial Overview Guidelines:

- All expenditures submitted for reimbursement must be necessary and reasonable for grant-related activities.
- All grant funds must be expended no later than September 30, 2026.
- All grant-related activities and expenses must adhere to **internal college policies**.
- For student events or activities with costs outside **standard institutional policies** (e.g., meals or refreshments), prior written approval from a senior campus leader is required.

- Refer to the **State Administrative & Accounting Manual** **(SAAM)** for additional financial guidance.

Reporting Requirements

- **Monthly Updates**: Grant recipients must provide **brief monthly updates** on implementation progress.
- **Final Report**: A **final narrative report** is due **October 30, 2026**.
- **Templates**: Standard reporting templates will be provided.

All expenses must be **necessary, reasonable, and directly related** to the student success and advising platform implementation. Institutions are responsible for maintaining clear financial documentation for **all** expenditures submitted for reimbursement.