

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2023, the ACCE Foundation and American Association of Community Colleges (AACCC) partnered with the Lumina Foundation to create a new national program called the Equitable Credential Attainment Cohort program (ECAC). Each participating community had a unique mission and teamed with partners to achieve specific goals. Their experiences and insights directly contributed to the creation of this toolkit.



EQUITABLE CREDENTIAL ATTAINMENT

Purpose of the Toolkit

This toolkit is a resource to help communities get started with undertaking their own equitable credentialing work. It includes best practices, processes, frameworks, links to resources and guides stakeholders through the following process:

- Preparing for the work by gathering data & background information
- Convening core partners and identifying a pilot goal
- Executing the plan
- Sustaining the work

Section Overviews

Preparing for the Work: Gathering Data & Background Information

Making credentialing more equitable in your community requires research. This section explains how to gain insight into your local population, potential partners, and scope of work. It also provides resources to help teams to create a vision and goals using data.

Convening Partners and Identifying a Goal

Strong, structured partnerships are essential to equitable credential attainment. Pilot programs can help determine what works well and what adjustments are needed. This section offers guidance on how to build trusted partnerships and provides a framework to identify specific roles and responsibilities for core team members. It also recommends how to agree on a common goal for the work.

Executing the Plan: Launching the Program

In this phase, teams will begin to implement their plans and determine how to remain collaborative while individual partners leverage their expertise. This includes everything from making updates to credential/degree programs based on employer business needs to implementing the method for tracking student enrollments and completions. Throughout this phase, teams should continue to evaluate their objectives and working relationship.

Sustaining the Work

Once teams are seeing meaningful outcomes from their pilot, they can spend additional time evaluating the work and discussing how to scale or shift their efforts. In this phase, partners will discuss fundraising, storytelling and messaging. They will also determine how they will remain aligned as the work continues.