



COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADER BULLETIN

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Third round of college and career transition counselor grants now open



The third round of the Iowa Department of Education's College and Career Transition Counselor (CCTC) grant application is currently open. In Iowa's current CCTC model, CCTCs work directly through the community college and secondary

schools to support college transition and career exploration through targeted connections with students and families during crucial time frames, including preparation, transition to enrollment and persistence through their postsecondary experience. The CCTCs work closely with students in grades 11 and 12 in partner high schools, throughout the summer after high school graduation and as part of the first-year support system for students coming out of this program at the coordinating community college. Five start-up grants will be awarded to community college-school district partnerships that create new CCTC positions for the 2023-2024 academic year.

To start an application, the partnering community college in connection with their partner school district(s) should log in or create a new account in [IowaGrants](#). The [College and Career Counselor Partnership Toolkit](#), which outlines the grant process, is also available on the Department website.

For more information, contact Erica Woods-Schmitz, Education Program Consultant, (erica.woods-schmitz@iowa.gov or (515) 330-0185).

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IowaGrants to have planned outage before updated platform launch



The new, upgraded IowaGrants.gov platform will officially go live Monday, December 12. To begin the transition to the new platform, **IowaGrants will be down from Sunday, December 4 at 12:01 a.m. through Saturday, December 10 at 11:59 p.m.** Users will have no access to either system (old or new) during this time.

Please ensure your organization plans accordingly for IowaGrants being unavailable by completing the following steps:

- Perform any required tasks before the onset of the upgrade. This could include submitting claims or other contract-related activity.
- Save all login activity and log out by **Saturday, December 3, 4:59 p.m.**
- Do not attempt to log back into the system until the upgrade has been completed after **December 10, 11:59 p.m.**

Though little impact is anticipated on your organization once the new platform is live, the upgrade will substantially change the appearance of IowaGrants. Notable improvements will include:

- A modern, fresh new look to the platform that powers IowaGrants
- Removal and replacement of the current main menu with content that is dynamic and continuously available to users via a side menu appended to the left side of the screen
- A new dashboard page that will be displayed after login where all workflow requiring your attention will be loaded and accessible
- All content being hyperlinked within each workflow
- The ability to sort all assigned workflows in an ascending or descending format upon any single desired field column header
- Enhanced search navigation options

[Click here](#) for a brief preview of the system highlighting some of the new key features. *Note: If the video is fuzzy, click the gear icon on the lower right side of the video screens and click Quality to update the video resolution.* More information on this transition will be forthcoming.

For more information, contact Dr. Jeffrey Fletcher, Education Program Consultant (jeffrey.fletcher@iowa.gov or (515) 321-7309).

Construction begins on Eastern Iowa regional center



On October 5, Eastern Iowa Community Colleges marked the beginning of construction on a new regional center that will serve students in eight rural school districts.

As a part of [Eastern Iowa Community Colleges \(EICC\)](#), the Clinton Community College Career Advancement Center is planned as a 26,000-square-foot facility that will feature a variety of [career and technical education \(CTE\)](#) programs, real-world equipment and opportunities for students to develop their career pathways prior to graduation.

“We are really excited to have a presence in the DeWitt, Calamus and Wheatland area,” said Brian Kelly, president of EICC’s Clinton Community College. “We have so many strong supporters of the college in that region, and we are all eager to provide an amazing facility to our students and community.”

The new regional center is funded from a portion of a local \$40 million bond referendum as well as a \$1 million grant award from the Iowa Department of Education's [Career Academy Incentive Fund](#). Established in 2019 through the Secure an Advanced Vision for Education fund, the Career Academy Incentive Fund supports partnerships between community colleges and school districts that help expand access to career academies, which are intended to link high school CTE programs with college-level programming.

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For more information, contact Jen Rathje, Education Program Consultant (jennifer.rathje@iowa.gov or (515) 326-5389).

[Apply now for the Career Academy Incentive Fund](#)



The Career Academy Incentive Fund is now accepting proposals for the first round of funding for fiscal year 2023. Grant submissions will be accepted through Nov. 3.

Partnerships between Iowa school districts and local community colleges that promote equitable access to high-quality [career and technical education \(CTE\)](#) programs are strongly encouraged to apply. Priority consideration will be given to applicants who focus on programming delivered through a regional center, a central location that offers high school students from several school districts the opportunity to explore career options while earning both high school and college credit.

The [Career Academy Incentive Fund](#) is provided through the 2019 reauthorization of Secure an Advanced Vision for Education (SAVE), and individual grant programs can be awarded up to \$1 million for career academy development and expansion. The number of grant awards is based on the amount of funds available and the scope of projects submitted.

Last year, six grants were awarded to partnerships across the state totaling \$5.5 million. Recent recipients include Indian Hills Community College, Western Iowa Tech Community College, Des Moines Area Community College, Iowa Lakes Community College, Iowa Western Community College and North Iowa Area Community College.

Career academies play an important role in expanding access to CTE programs for Iowa's students. Valuable skill development, career exploration, work-based learning and professional training for high-demand careers are provided through career academies.

Application materials for the 2022-23 Career Academy Incentive Fund have been updated. To find the most recent grant materials and resources, visit the Department's [Career Academy Incentive Fund webpage](#).

For more information, contact Jen Rathje, Education Program Consultant (jennifer.rathje@iowa.gov or (515) 326-5389).

[Customized trainings address Iowa's workforce shortage](#)



By connecting with one of the state's 15 community colleges, businesses can offer customized trainings for their employees who may need additional skills or certifications. Community colleges work with employers to determine the needs and direction for a customized training curriculum and can cover anything from workplace safety to communication and language skills to leadership development and more. Each customized training provides the opportunity to develop talent specifically for that individual company and its culture.

"Customized trainings are a strength of community colleges," said Paula Nissen, administrative consultant for the Iowa Department of Education. "Businesses, in partnership with their local community college, can develop and upskill their talent directly. It's a way for them to find the right person for the job and then fill any gaps that person may need through training."

In Cedar Rapids, businesses can partner with [Kirkwood Community College](#) for training curriculum opportunities to strengthen and upskill their personnel.

"Every industry, small or large, is feeling the strain from workforce shortage issues, and they are in need of support," said Amy Lasack, executive director of continuing education at Kirkwood Community College. "It's important that we are working together to find that support for them."

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For more information, contact Paula Nissen, Administrative Consultant (paula.nissen2@iowa.gov or (515) 210-9465).

Shared resource brings new opportunities for career discovery



For four eastern Iowa school districts, career exploration just got easier. A new shared coordinator focused solely on work-based learning experiences is now onboard, traveling to middle and high schools to help connect students to hands-on learning and career pathway discovery.

Through [Eastern Iowa Community Colleges](#), Christina Anderson fills the newly created role as the shared work-based learning coordinator for Durant, West Liberty, Columbus Junction and Louisa-Muscatine schools. She splits her time evenly and is on each campus weekly, which allows her to make meaningful connections with students looking to explore potential career interests and develop job skills. And although she is a fresh face in these school districts this year, she is ready to dive in with work-based learning.

"I'm very excited and extremely motivated to get started in this new role as a shared work-based learning coordinator," she said. "I'm eager to connect middle and high school students with local businesses to provide hands-on, real-world experience and inspire academic and career success."

Work-based learning coordinators provide much support to schools looking to provide personalized guidance to students who are exploring different career fields. They work closely with school counselors and [college and career transition counselors](#) in assessing a student's interests, skills and career dreams in order to match them with individualized hands-on opportunities, such as job shadows, internships and worksite visits.

"Not too long ago, this type of work fell to school counselors," said Erica Ewert, intermediary coordinator for Eastern Iowa Community Colleges. "By having a work-based learning coordinator to focus strictly on career exploration, students have more opportunities for quality experiences to help understand what careers are out there and how their skills align."

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For more information about shared work-based learning coordinators, contact Kristy Volesky, Education Program Consultant (kristy.volesky@iowa.gov or (515) 971-0669). For more information about college and career transition counselors, contact Erica Woods-Schmitz, Education Program Consultant (erica.woods-schmitz@iowa.gov or (515) 330-0185).

Division thanks Alex Harris for a decade of service



The Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation team thanks Alex Harris for his decade of service as the State Director for Adult Education. Alex's last day with the Division will be October 28.

Alex will next serve as the Deputy Executive Director of Adult Education for the Alabama Community College System. Please join us in thanking Alex for all he has done to support adult education in Iowa (alex.harris@iowa.gov or (515) 423-7282).

Division welcomes new policy and finance administrative consultant

The Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation is pleased to announce that Lora Vargason will join the team on October 28th as the administrative consultant for policy and finance.

Lora comes to us most recently from the Iowa Department on Aging where she was the fiscal director. She also served as a fiscal analyst for the Legislative Services Agency. Lora has a bachelor's degree in Accounting from Upper Iowa University and is a licensed CPA.



Within the Division, Lora will oversee public policies and financial programs impacting Iowa's community colleges.

Career opportunities with the Division



We are seeking talented individuals who are passionate about excellence in education to fill positions within the Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation.

We don't just talk about inclusion: it's how we do business. Our team is globally diverse and we seek candidates whose differences will challenge our ideas, spur innovation and ultimately help build stronger programs serving the people of Iowa.

The division is currently seeking applicants to fill an [administrative consultant](#) position. This position provides leadership for adult education programs, and will close for applications Sunday, November 6. The division is also seeking applicants for an [education program consultant](#) position. The position provides leadership for Veteran's Education and Training, and will close for applications Sunday, November 13.

To learn more about opportunities within the division, please contact Jeremy Varner, Administrator, Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation (jeremy.varner@iowa.gov or (515) 242-6187.

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