



(Re)Engage Alabama Request for Proposals

Purpose

Education and training are key to supporting individuals and families and creating a stronger economy. Under the leadership of Governor Kay Ivey, Alabama has set a [statewide goal](#) of adding 500,000 credentialed Alabamians to the labor force. In order to reach this goal, and to provide opportunities for every Alabamian to earn the skills and knowledge to succeed, Alabama is committed to supporting adult students, recognizing that adults experience unique challenges when pursuing their academic and workforce training goals.

Between 2017 and 2021, students over the age of 25 comprised nearly 15% of the total baccalaureate-seeking population at Alabama’s public universities, with just under 20,000 enrolled per year on average (*Alabama Statewide Student Database*). To advance the state’s commitment to supporting non-traditional students, the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE), Alabama Possible, the Governor's Office of Education and Workforce Transformation (GOEWT), and the Alabama Workforce Council are launching the (Re)Engage Alabama Initiative, an adult attainment-focused initiative intended to align multiple ongoing projects that target adult students seeking baccalaureate degrees.

Launch

On August 3, 2022, the partners hosted a launch event for the (Re)Engage Alabama Initiative at the Montgomery Campus of Troy University. More than 60 academic and student services leaders from 13 public universities gathered for a daylong convening that focused on the following outcomes:

- **Connecting** multiple ongoing adult-focused initiatives under a common set of goals
- **Engaging with data** on adult students across Alabama’s public universities and within each institution
- **Strengthening** awareness and partnership across multiple adult-focused initiatives
- **Sharing** promising practices and common challenges
- **Building a coalition** of institutions of higher education (IHEs) focused on adult enrollment and degree completion.

The (Re)Engage Alabama Initiative

Following the launch, the (Re)Engage Alabama partners invite interested institutions to participate in the (Re)Engage Alabama Initiative. This yearlong initiative is designed as **an adult attainment-focused continuous improvement (CI) cohort that enables regular, ongoing data sharing and creates communication channels** for sharing best practices for enrolling and supporting adult students to completion across four-year public IHEs. CI is both a mindset and a process that involves using data and stakeholder engagement to uncover insights, design solutions, and take actions to improve outcomes on an ongoing basis. CI processes typically have four steps (depicted on the right): collecting data, analyzing data, discussing results, and improving outcomes.



Based on input received at the launch event, the cohort will be organized around quarterly meetings, with individual institutional team sessions occurring between meetings. Alabama's CI process will enable IHEs and other stakeholders to:

- Better understand and discuss data on enrollment and completion outcomes for adult students across IHEs, as well as how these outcomes connect with labor force participation outcomes;
- Identify and scale specific solutions that IHEs have in place that support adult enrollment and attainment and have been shown to positively impact outcomes; and
- Connect, align, and augment existing and ongoing state- and IHE-level efforts to support adults.

Institutional Grant Opportunity

ACHE has identified an initial pool of funding (\$3000-\$5000 per institution) to support institutions in engaging in the initiative and developing a strategic action plan for (re)engaging adult students, which may include:

- **New or deeper relationships with community-based organizations, regional workforce and economic development partners, and employers** to identify and support adult students in their academic and career aspirations;
- **Institutional adoption and systemization of Prior Learning Assessments and/or pre-emptive degree audits** for adults with significant credit but no degree to provide more realistic time-to-graduation expectations;
- **Development of strategic recruitment and enrollment plans** aimed at attracting and retaining adult students, including enhancements to academic program offerings or delivery methods in response to the needs of adults in your region;
- **Regular, ongoing analysis and monitoring of enrollment, persistence, and graduation outcomes** for adult students;
- **Improved support services**, including admissions, advising, financial aid, basic needs supports, and academic supports, that accommodate the needs of adult students; and
- **Implementation of data-driven interventions** based on what is moving the needle on outcomes.

ACHE invites public universities to submit proposals indicating their interest in this initiative and what they hope to achieve during AY 2022-23. The attached guidelines should be used to structure the proposal. Given the strong interest in this initiative, ACHE is eager to spread available funding across a greater number of institutions and can therefore commit to grants of \$3000 per institution. If an institution seeks funding beyond \$3000 (but no more than \$5000), the proposal should provide a budget detailing how those additional funds will be used.

Proposals should be submitted electronically to Margaret Cabble, Coordinator of Strategic Programs (margaret.cabble@ache.edu), by Monday, September 12, 2022.



(Re)Engage Alabama RFP Guidelines

Institutional proposals should include the following elements:

- Overview of your institution's approach to serving adult students
- Description of current assets that can be leveraged to support adult students, which may include any initiative be it in academic programming, financial aid, and/or student services aimed at increasing adult enrollment or improving outcomes for adult students
- Description of gaps in serving adults
- Identification of 3-4 priority areas to focus on throughout the cohort
- Statement of desired outcomes from participation in (Re)Engage Alabama
- Metrics used for measuring success (tools may be qualitative and/or quantitative)
- Brief description of the internal process your institutional team must use to request reports with additional student data, and how long it typically takes for reports to be produced
- Identification of specific subpopulations or data disaggregations that are of interest (seen through the lens of equity)
- Institutional team responsible for this project (should include some representation from academic affairs, student services, enrollment management, and institutional effectiveness/research)
- If funds in excess of \$3000 are requested, a budget describing how funds will be used to support this project

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