

WICHE Workplan FY 2022



FOCUS AREAS

Access & Success

Accountability

Finance &
Affordability

Technology &
Innovation

Workforce & Society

WICHE FY 2022 Workplan

WICHE's Mission

WICHE and its 15 states and two territories work collaboratively to expand educational access and excellence for all citizens of the West. By promoting innovation, cooperation, resource sharing, and sound public policy, WICHE strengthens higher education's contributions to the region's social, economic, and civic life.

Each May, WICHE's 48-member commission develops and approves the organization's annual Workplan. This Workplan outlines the diverse set of activities, projects, and initiatives that the WICHE Commission has prioritized for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021, all of which are intended to advance WICHE's mission.

The WICHE Commission has identified five key focus areas to guide the work of the organization:

- **Finance & Affordability (F/A):** supporting the alignment of appropriations, tuition, and financial aid policy and practice at the institutional, state, and federal levels to increase postsecondary affordability
- **Access & Success (A/S):** improving students' access to and success in higher education, especially those who are traditionally underserved
- **Workforce & Society (W/S):** collaborating across sectors to meet the region's workforce and societal needs
- **Technology & Innovation (T/I):** developing and supporting innovations in technology and beyond that improve the quality of postsecondary education and reduce costs
- **Accountability (A):** striving to ensure that students receive an education that is valuable to them and that government is receiving a strong return on its investment.

WICHE has four operational units – Programs and Services, Policy Analysis and Research, Behavioral Health, and the WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies (WCET) – that implement the Workplan by conceptualizing and managing a vast array of programs, projects, and initiatives, and by developing valuable resources that address the needs of member states and territories. When appropriate, some initiatives also extend beyond the WICHE region.

- **Programs and Services:** The primary goals of the Programs and Services unit are to broaden student access and success and to foster higher education collaborations that increase institutional effectiveness. Programs and Services manages WICHE's four Student Access Programs and other initiatives that help institutions and students – undergraduate, graduate, and health professional – save money and make good use of available resources. The unit also oversees initiatives that bring together the West's higher education leaders to address common goals and issues, streamline the student transfer process through a nationwide network of Interstate Passport® institutions, and develop a new cadre of academic administrative leaders. In addition, it helps institutions achieve cost savings through four programs in collaboration with the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC), which created and administers the programs.
- **Policy Analysis and Research:** The Policy Analysis and Research unit supports better-informed decision-making, principally at the state level, by providing a variety of policy analysis and data resources. The unit leads research projects and collaborative initiatives that focus on closing postsecondary attainment gaps, college completion, and multistate data-sharing to support educational planning and workforce development. WICHE staff are useful resources on higher education issues including demographic change, equity in higher education, adult learners, state and federal financial aid, finance, articulation and transfer, federal policy, and college completion initiatives. The unit's two publication series, *WICHE Insights* and *Western Policy Exchanges*, explore a wide range of significant policy issues. The unit also undertakes

major long-term grant-funded projects, collaborates with other regional and national organizations, and provides short-term technical assistance to members.

- **Behavioral Health:** The WICHE Behavioral Health Program seeks to enhance the public systems of care and the workforce that serve people with behavioral health issues and their families. The program supports this mission through partnerships with state behavioral health agencies, federal agencies, advocacy and consumer groups, and higher education institutions. WICHE Behavioral Health activities focus on direct technical assistance to state and local agencies, policy analysis and research, support of state behavioral health agency data analysis, and higher education liaison activities to enhance workforce development.
- **WCET:** The WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies (WCET) was established in 1989 to promote collaboration and information sharing related to educational technologies in higher education. WCET's mission is to accelerate the adoption of effective practices and policies, advancing excellence in digital teaching and learning in higher education. Today, WCET supports nearly 400 member colleges, universities, state higher education agencies, nonprofits and for-profit companies across the U.S. and Canada, with over 6,000 active users of WCET resources. Dues paid by these members help enable WCET to be effectively a self-supporting unit. WCET's strategic action plan focuses on practice, policy, and advocacy, and fulfills these core functions by leveraging the expertise within the WCET community, supporting action agendas based on member priorities, facilitating information dissemination and professional networking, and delivering responsive excellence to its higher education members.

Importantly, WICHE, an organization founded on the idea of collaboration, prides itself on working in partnership across units to better serve the region. The final section of this Workplan highlights collaborations across WICHE units.

Finally, each of the following sections is organized according to these categories:

- **Current Activities:** WICHE's current work, segmented into:
 - **Ongoing Services and Resources:** continuing work supported by the general fund or fees
 - **Projects & Initiatives:** continuing (or new) work supported by grants, contracts, or fees
- **New Directions:** commission-approved projects for which staff is seeking funding
- **Potential Future Projects:** work that staff is considering pursuing (and bringing to the commission for approval); also listed are projects that staff previously considered pursuing but now proposes to remove from the Workplan
- **Completed Projects:** work that staff finished in FY 2020.

To guide commission consideration, projects in the New Directions category are prioritized by relevance to WICHE's mission, opportunity, and staff competence. Current Activities are not given prioritization rankings, since they are initiatives WICHE staff already has committed to undertaking. Potential Future Projects also are not given prioritization rankings, because they are not approved and remain under consideration by the commission.

Programs and Services

CURRENT ACTIVITIES Services and Resources

Continuing work that supports WICHE's mission, supported by the general fund or fees. All work in this category is considered high-priority.

Focus:

F/A Finance and Affordability **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **T/I** Technology & Innovation **A** Accountability

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Staff FTE	Partners
COVID-19 Response, Support, and Planning	F/A; A/S; W/S; T/I; A	Western	TBD	Forum and Alliance members and TBD
Academic Leaders Toolkit	A/S	Western	(included in Forum and Alliance)	Forum and Alliance members
Master Property Program	F/A	WICHE/MHEC/NEBHE/SREB states	.10	MHEC/Marsh carriers, 8 states (AZ, CO, ID, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY), 27 campuses
MHEC Cyber Insurance	F/A; A	WICHE/MHEC/NEBHE/SREB states	.05	All WICHE members are eligible
MHECare	F/A; A/S	WICHE/MHEC/NEBHE states	.05	MHEC/United HealthCare Student Resources, 1 state (AK), 2 institutions
MHECtech	F/A	WICHE/MHEC/NEBHE/SREB states	.15	All WICHE members
Online Course Exchange	A/S; T/I	National	.10	2 consortia serving 21 institutions
Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) *	A/S; W/S	Western	1.65	All WICHE members send and/or receive students except Guam; 130+ programs at 62 participating institutions
Western Academic Leadership Academy (Academy)	W/S; A	Western	.10 and consultants	Forum members
Western Academic Leadership Forum (Forum) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional Development: 2022 Annual Meeting Collaborative projects 	A/S; A	Western	.45	All WICHE members; 49 institutions, 9 systems
Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders (Alliance) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional Development: 2022 Annual Meeting Collaborative projects 	A/S; A	Western	.35	All WICHE members; 72 institutions, 9 systems
Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP)*	A/S; W/S	Western	.50	All WICHE members; 1,350 programs at 63 institutions

Programs and Services

Focus:

F/A Finance and Affordability **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **T/I** Technology & Innovation **A** Accountability

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Staff FTE	Partners
Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE)	A/S; W/S	Western	1.00	All WICHE members; 162 participating institutions

The short- and long-term impacts of the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis continue to be far-reaching and uncertain. WICHE staff at all levels and in all units are continuing to work to support the region in whatever ways they can, and will continue to do so in FY 2022. For example, staff have hosted webinars; created a variety of useful resources; convened regular peer-to-peer calls for SHEEOs, academic leaders, and communications professionals; provided guidance for higher education leaders, etc. but the needs continue. Given the changing nature of the situation, it is impossible to identify the specific ways that WICHE will provide support other than to commit to being collaborative and proactive in meeting the needs of our states and territories.

The **Academic Leaders Toolkit**, jointly funded by the Alliance and Forum, is a peer-reviewed, searchable online repository of decision-making tools contributed by college and university and system-level academic leaders. Tools in a range of categories – such as program evaluation, creation, and elimination; faculty recruitment and retention; and learning-outcomes assessment – help academic leaders address a variety of challenges.

The **Master Property Program**, a **Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC)** partnership available to WICHE institutions, has saved institutions more than \$100 million on comprehensive property insurance coverage over the years. The insurance program now serves 180 two- and four-year campuses nationwide with total insured values of \$83 billion, including 27 campuses and centers in eight WICHE-member states. It enables public and nonprofit private institutions to receive coverage at rates below industry averages, while improving their risk management and asset protection.

The **MHEC Cyber Insurance Program**, in conjunction with Marsh USA Inc., offers institutions access to services including analysis of the cyber threat environment, the significance of vulnerabilities in security controls, and potential financial exposure should breaches occur. It can also help institutions benchmark how much cyber coverage similar institutions and systems are buying.

MHECare, another MHEC partnership available in WICHE member states, offers institutions and systems a student health insurance plan underwritten by UnitedHealthcare StudentResources (UHCSR). UHCSR was selected through a competitive bid process, enabling member institutions to avoid a time- and resource-consuming request-for-proposal process.

A fourth MHEC partnership, **MHECtech**, enables institutions to purchase off competitively bid master purchasing agreements for an array of hardware, software, and technology services. Several of the agreements are also available to K-12 districts; state, county, and local governments; and education-related nonprofits. More than 1,600 institutions and other entities in 13 WICHE states benefit from aggregated volume purchases that lowered product cost and saved institutions \$6.5 million as well as institutional time.

The **Online Course Exchange (OCE)** enables students to seamlessly enroll, through their home institutions, in online courses offered by other two- and four-year institutions participating in a consortium. Consortia contract with WICHE for use of its robust OCE platform, designed to support the exchange of online course enrollments among multiple institutions to provide more options for students and optimize use of institutional resources.

The **Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP)** provides affordable access for students to 130+ health care professional programs at 62 institutions and in 10 health care fields. In 2020-21, 567 students from 10 WICHE states and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands received \$13.9 million (reflecting investment by their home-state legislatures) in tuition benefits through PSEP. Since its 1953 inception, PSEP has helped more than 15,446 students, many of whom return to their home states to fill key health care positions.

The **Western Academic Leadership Academy** is a yearlong professional development program aimed at expanding the pipeline of qualified chief academic leaders for four-year institutions in the West. Academy activities focus on understanding the context of academic leadership, setting academic goals and priorities, and developing specific skill sets required of chief academic officers. Its sixth cohort, nominated by members of the Western Academic Leadership Forum, will commence in July 2021. The Academy is funded by registration fees, sponsorships, and Forum support.

The **Western Academic Leadership Forum (Forum)** brings together WICHE-region chief academic leaders from four-year institutions and associated systems and state coordinating and governing boards to exchange ideas and information, share resources and expertise, and collaborate on regional initiatives. The Forum is funded primarily by membership dues, with additional funding provided by annual meeting sponsors.

Programs and Services

The **Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders (Alliance)** brings together academic leaders at community colleges and technical schools and related systems and state agencies to exchange ideas and information, share resources and expertise, and collaborate on regional initiatives supporting the two-year higher education sector. Like the Forum, the Alliance is funded by membership dues and annual meeting sponsors.

The **Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP)** allows WICHE-region residents to cross state lines yet pay resident tuition rates for approximately 1,350 master's, graduate certificate, and doctoral programs at 63 participating public universities. In 2020-21, 2,441 students saved an estimated \$34.6 million in tuition through WRGP. The WRGP program-distinctiveness requirement has been lifted and Western public universities may make any graduate program eligible at the WRGP tuition rate at their discretion, which has significantly increased the number of students who can benefit. As of the 2020-21 academic year, participating programs now have the option to charge WRGP students up to 150 percent of resident tuition, but the vast majority continue to charge students resident tuition.

The **Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE)** is WICHE's signature undergraduate discount-tuition program and the nation's largest of its kind, saving 42,481 students an estimated \$411.7 million in tuition in 2020-21. Currently, 162 public two- and four-year WICHE-region institutions allow WUE students to pay no more than 150 percent of resident tuition – instead of full nonresident tuition, which can exceed 300 percent of resident tuition. The Programs and Services unit will continue to expand the marketing of WUE and WRGP to benefit more students and institutions through targeted, state-specific publicity and activities as well as increased outreach to high school counselors and admissions advisers.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES Projects and Initiatives

Continuing (or new) work supported by grants and contracts. All work in this category is considered high-priority.

Focus:

F/A Finance and Affordability **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **T/I** Technology & Innovation **A** Accountability

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/Timeline	Partners
Interstate Passport®	A/S; T/I	National	ECMC Foundation \$500,000 grant	3.25 and consultants (11/20-10/22)	55 institutions in 13 WICHE states and 4 institutions in 4 other states are members; 9 additional institutions have signed a letter of intent to join the Network by June 30, 2021. Institutions in these and several other states are in the exploration stage
			General Fund support (approved at Nov. 2020 Commission Meeting from Programs and Services reserves)		
			National Science Foundation \$300,000 grant	1.25 and consultants (3/21-2/22)	NMSU and its 4 community colleges

Interstate Passport® is a national initiative that facilitates the block transfer of lower-division general education based on multistate, faculty-developed learning outcomes and proficiency criteria. It is the only nationwide network of institutionally accredited, nonprofit, public, and private two- and four-year institutions dedicated to the block transfer of general education attainment. It also provides institutions in the network with an academic progress tracking system for Passport transfer students designed by registrars and institutional researchers in conjunction with the National Student Clearinghouse. The goal of Interstate Passport is to eliminate transfer students' unnecessary repetition of learning previously achieved. WICHE staff provide overall direction and support for this innovative program. A two-year grant from ECMC Foundation is enabling WICHE to further expand the Passport Network by providing 20 institutions (10 of which are minority-serving institutions) a two-year membership fee waiver and personalized onboarding support.

The award from NSF is supporting a collaboration with New Mexico State University (NMSU) and its four community colleges to address issues related to engineering degree attainment by testing the feasibility of using sets of lower-division student learning

Programs and Services

outcomes (SLOs) as the basis of block transfer into engineering programs. WICHE is conducting a literature review to further identify factors that inhibit transfers within engineering disciplines; articulate a theory of change, and recruit leaders of national organizations and two-year and four-year institutions representing at least four states to analyze and refine NMSU's proof of concept and assess the feasibility of scaling NMSU's work to additional institutions.

NEW DIRECTIONS

Commission-approved projects for which staff is actively seeking funding, prioritized as follows:

Focus:

F/A Finance and Affordability **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **T/I** Technology & Innovation **A** Accountability

Project prioritization:


Relevance
(mission-critical)







Opportunity
(funding)



Competence
(staff/consultants)



Project Title	Focus	Priority	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
Interstate Passport®	A/S; T/I		National	Seeking grant funding from other foundations	TBD	Interstate Passport Network members and potential members
Online Course Exchange – FlexPATH Alliance	A/S; T/I		National	Grant request pending: \$1,416,883 National Science Foundation subaward (5 years)	1.90	University of Nevada, Reno; New Mexico State University; University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign; and their respective community colleges
Compact for Faculty Diversity	A/S; W/S		National	TBD	TBD	Midwestern Higher Education Compact, New England Board of Higher Education, Southern Regional Education Board
Reducing the Postsecondary Attainment Gap for American Indians and Alaska Natives: Linking Policy and Practice (seeking additional external funding to further assist NASNTIs and sustain an institutional network)	A/S		National	TBD	2.30 TBD	Native American-Serving Nontribal Institutions, Tribal colleges, Tribal education departments, higher education organizations

Interstate Passport® is a national initiative that facilitates the block transfer of lower-division general education based on multistate, faculty-developed learning outcomes and proficiency criteria.

The Online Course Exchange (OCE) enables students to seamlessly enroll, through their home institutions, in online courses offered by other two- and four-year institutions participating in a consortium. Consortia contract with WICHE for use of its OCE platform, designed to support the exchange of online course enrollments among multiple institutions to provide more options for students and optimize use of institutional resources. In February 2021, university, community college, and organizational partners from three states submitted a proposal to the National Science Foundation to create the **Flexible Pathways for Access through the Transfer Hub**, or (**FlexPATH Alliance**). The partners propose to collaborate to better understand and address the systemic barriers to educational access and success in pre-engineering education for community college students from underserved communities including students of color, low-income, women, and first-generation college-bound students. Broadening the participation of these groups that have disproportionately low enrollment and graduation rates in university engineering programs is crucial to meet the West's and the nation's workforce needs. If funding is received, WICHE will serve as the backbone partner for the FlexPATH Alliance as it identifies freshman and sophomore engineering courses that are missing at the participating community colleges and then creates online courses to be offered by each participating institution, using the OCE to facilitate the online course enrollments.

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The Compact for Faculty Diversity: Staff are collaborating with the other three higher education regional compacts to seek funding to reinvigorate the Compact for Faculty Diversity and its associated Doctoral Scholars Program. The programs would address the significant imbalance that continues nationwide in terms of the racial and ethnic composition of faculties. Goals of the initiative are to increase faculty diversity in all ranks and across all institution types to equal or exceed the diversity of the nation by engaging postsecondary systems, institutions, and leaders in concrete commitments to increase the hiring of faculty of color, supported by specific action plans.

Reducing the Postsecondary Attainment Gap for American Indians and Alaska Natives: Linking Policy and Practice, an initiative first begun in late 2017 with funding from Lumina Foundation, continues to have strong relevance in light of the persistent postsecondary attainment gap of American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) compared to other student populations. Staff will seek funding to continue efforts to reduce or eliminate these gaps at Native American-Serving Nontribal Institutions (NASNTIs) by supporting the use of culturally relevant high-impact practices and fostering institutional and tribal collaborations to share and expand sustainable student support systems on campuses. Another major objective going forward is to continue to strengthen the NASNTI presence and impact in state and federal higher education policy arenas and to create a collaborative network of institutions serving large numbers of American Indians and Alaska Natives.

Previously considered pursuing but that staff now proposes to remove from the Workplan. **None**

POTENTIAL FUTURE PROJECTS

Work that staff is considering pursuing and bringing to the Commission for approval, along with ideas generated by a survey of commissioners:

The **Alliance Academic Leadership Academy** would identify, develop, and prepare aspiring academic leaders for career advancement and success in progressively more complex administrative roles at community, junior, and technical colleges across the West.

COMPLETED PROJECTS

Work that staff finished in FY 2021

Reducing the Postsecondary Attainment Gap for American Indians and Alaska Natives: Linking Policy and Practice, funded by a grant from Lumina Foundation and launched in December 2017, was a collaboration of two-year and four-year institutions designated as Native American-Serving Nontribal Institutions (NASNTIs) by the U.S. Department of Education. The initiative addressed the higher education attainment gap of American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) compared to other student populations at these institutions and identified strategies to reduce the gaps. During the initiative, NASNTI administrators and faculty were convened at two national summits and in virtual settings through a webinar series. At the outset, WICHE awarded small grants to 11 of the institutions to support planning for achieving quantifiable goals to narrow attainment gaps, implement high impact practices and other efforts leading to students' academic success, and to foster sustainability in their programs. Additional Lumina funding was provided to assist the grantee campuses in meeting AI/AN students' access to online courses and provide virtual student support services during the pandemic. Several reports and case studies were produced that focused on effective practices to enhance the educational attainment of American Indian and Alaska Native students and provide a platform for considering options for future related initiatives.

Policy Analysis and Research

CURRENT ACTIVITIES Services and Resources

Continuing work that supports WICHE's mission, supported by the general fund or fees. All work in this category is considered high-priority.

Focus:

F/A Finance and Affordability **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **T/I** Technology & Innovation **A** Accountability

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Staff FTE	Partners
COVID-19 Response, Support, and Planning	F/A; A/S; W/S; T/I; A	Western	.25	All WICHE members
Benchmarks: WICHE Region	A	Western	.025	N/A
Legislative Advisory Committee	F/A; A/S; W/S; T/I; A	Western	.25	All WICHE members
Regional Fact Book for Higher Education in the West	A	Western	.025	N/A
State Policy and Data Profiles	F/A; A/S; W/S; T/I; A	National	.20	N/A
Tuition and Fees in Public Higher Education in the West	F/A	Western	.025	All WICHE members
Western Policy Exchanges	F/A; A/S; W/S; T/I; A	Western	.05	N/A
WICHE Insights	F/A; A/S; W/S; T/I; A	Western	.10	N/A
WICHE Policy Webinar Series	F/A; A/S; W/S; T/I; A	Western	.10	Variable
WICHE State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement	A/S; T/I; A	Western	2.25	NC-SARA; Western SARA signatories; MHEC, NEBHE, and SREB

The short- and long-term impacts of the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis continue to be far-reaching and uncertain. WICHE staff at all levels and in all units are continuing to work to support the region in whatever ways they can, and they will continue to do so in FY 2022. For example, staff have hosted webinars; created a variety of useful resources; convened regular peer-to-peer calls for SHEEOs, academic leaders, and communications professionals; provided guidance for higher education leaders, etc. but the needs continue. Given the changing nature of the situation, it is impossible to identify the specific ways that WICHE will provide support other than to commit to being collaborative and proactive in meeting the needs of our states and territories. The Policy Analysis and Research Unit will continue to convene biweekly calls with state/system chief academic officers, which attendees have found extremely beneficial for the resource and information sharing that takes place. The unit is also undertaking work to make select Resources and Projects responsive to new information regarding COVID-19's education impacts.

The annual *Benchmarks: WICHE Region* report analyzes key higher education metrics and information about the West's progress in improving access to, success in, and financing of higher education. This resource helps stakeholders monitor regional changes over time and informs discussion in policy and education communities. Utilizing WICHE's Policy Analysis Research Database (PARD), the Benchmarks data dashboard now includes state information as well as regional metrics.

The **Legislative Advisory Committee (LAC)** informs the WICHE Commission (the Commission) and staff about significant legislative issues related to higher education, and WICHE staff serves the LAC by informing members about emerging policy issues in the West and relevant policy research. LAC members are appointed by the Commission and meet annually.

WICHE's *Regional Fact Book for Higher Education in the West* presents regional and state-by-state data and analysis on policy indicators across a range of topics. These fiscal, demographic, economic, and social indicators provide up-to-date information for policymakers, educators, and researchers in the West. The *Fact Book's* downloadable data tables are updated periodically

throughout the year. WICHE will release several enhanced tables in FY 2022, providing increased detail and interactivity, and adding new analysis. WICHE will supplement the core data sources, as possible, to keep this resource contemporary to COVID-19 impacts.

WICHE will continue building out *State Policy and Data Profiles* that capture state postsecondary contexts. The development of the **Policy Analysis and Research Database (PAR)** will enable the Policy Unit to provide more detailed and relevant information specific to each WICHE member.

Tuition and Fees in Public Higher Education in the West annually provides comprehensive data about the tuition and fee rates published by public higher education institutions in the WICHE region, including changes in tuition and fee rates over the past one-, five- and 10-year periods. In addition to total tuition and fees, the report displays the average mandatory fees for each institution, state, and the region over the past one, five, and 10 years, as well as what proportion of total tuition and fees they represent.

Western Policy Exchanges publications are of similar form to *WICHE Insights* briefs, yet cover other topics including legislative activity in the West.

The *WICHE Insights* publication series consists of periodic briefs (usually published several times a year) that illuminate a higher education policy or research topic, or that supplement a regular WICHE activity or release (such as our annual *Tuition and Fees* or our quadrennial *Knocking at the College Door* report).

The **WICHE Policy Webinar** series features WICHE staff, partners, and/or higher education stakeholders periodically hosting digital forums for registrants on selected higher education topics of interest. Anticipated topics for FY 2022 will largely focus on COVID-19 recovery, potentially including reengagement of students who dropped out or never started due to the pandemic, behavioral health on campus, and others.

The **WICHE State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (W-SARA)** provides a platform for Western states to – upon application and demonstration of specified criteria – enter into reciprocity for the purpose of authorizing individual colleges and universities to provide postsecondary education courses and programs through distance modalities to students living in other states. Four regional SARAs – functioning within the four existing higher education regional interstate compacts – facilitate reciprocity among participating states within their respective regions. The four regional SARAs are connected through an inter-regional agreement to create a nationwide reciprocity framework, known as the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA).

CURRENT ACTIVITIES Projects and Initiatives

Continuing (or new) work supported by grants and contracts. All work in this category is considered high-priority.

Focus:

F/A Finance and Affordability **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **T/I** Technology & Innovation **A** Accountability

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
Increasing Access, Affordability, and Equity Using OER: A National Consortium	F/A; A/S	Western/ National	\$1.2 million	2.25 FY21-22	Hewlett Foundation, WCET, MHEC, NEBHE, SREB
Data for the American Dream	A/S; W/S; A	National	NCHEMS contract; \$150,000	.40 2/19-9/21	NCHEMS, Schmidt Futures
Cybersecurity Training for Senior Nontechnical Leaders	T/I	Western	DHS	.10 7/17-TBD	WCET, DHS, FEMA, SHEEO offices of participant states
Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates	A/S	National	\$75,000	.625 in FY22 5/19-5/22	College Board, others

Policy Analysis and Research

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
Intermediaries for Scale Partnership	F/A; A/S; T/I	National	American Indian Higher Education Consortium; Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation \$59,000	TBD	NCHEMS, Programs & Services

Increasing Access, Affordability, and Equity Using OER: A National Consortium: The policy unit and WCET received funding to create a national consortium with the three other regional higher education compacts – the Midwest Higher Education Compact, the Southern Regional Education Board, and the New England Board of Higher Education – focused on scaling the successful adoption of high-quality open educational resources to improve student outcomes, increase equity, and improve affordability. There is significant collaboration and coordination across regions with WCET serving as the “backbone” of the effort.

Data for the American Dream: WICHE has been contracted by the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) to consult on a project that seeks to improve the information available on education and training opportunities for low-income, unemployed, and under-employed individuals. This effort draws heavily on WICHE expertise developed through the Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange.

Cybersecurity Training for Senior Nontechnical Leaders: As an additional component of the cybersecurity initiative, WICHE is continuing to develop partnerships with cyber experts and conducting outreach to WICHE states to provide training for institutional non-technical leaders for cyber protection.

Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates: The Policy Analysis and Research unit released the 10th edition of state-by-state forecasts of high school graduates in December 2020. During FY 2022, staff will continue dissemination activities and produce tools that can help users understand the potential implications of the COVID-19 pandemic and developing analysis related to socio-economic status.

Intermediaries for Scale Partnership: Although not selected to be one of the Intermediaries for Scale grantees of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, WICHE is pursuing multiple partnerships with those organizations that were selected. WICHE has recently been chosen by the American Indian Higher Education Consortium to facilitate its efforts to develop an effective data infrastructure and staff capacity. This will in turn aid in AIHEC’s work to support Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) and provide leadership on American Indian and Alaska Native higher education issues. WICHE staff will continue to review other opportunities to partner with Intermediaries for Scale where the work fits with WICHE’s mission and staff expertise.

NEW DIRECTIONS

Commissioner-approved projects for which staff is actively seeking funding, prioritized as follows:


Focus:



F/A Finance and Affordability A/S Access & Success W/S Workforce & Society T/I Technology & Innovation A Accountability

Project prioritization:

Relevance (mission-critical)


Opportunity (funding)


Competence (staff/consultants)


Project Title	Focus	Priority	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
COVID-19 Reengagement Network	F/A; A/S; W/S		Western	\$1.2 million	3.0 3 years	TBD
Building Evidence for Scale: Policy and Practice Solutions for Adult Learners	A/S; W/S		National	\$1.5 - 2 million	1.75 4 years	TBD

Policy Analysis and Research

Focus:

F/A Finance and Affordability **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **T/I** Technology & Innovation **A** Accountability

Project prioritization:

Relevance
(mission-critical)



Opportunity
(funding)



Competence
(staff/consultants)



Project Title	Focus	Priority	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
Evaluation and Research Partnerships	A/S; A		Western	Dependent upon size and scale of effort	.05 Ongoing	Western states
Exploratory Research into Programs Designed to Increase Postsecondary Attainment in Idaho	A/S; A		Western	\$385,313	.0825 2 years	Idaho State Board of Education
Policy Paper Series on Affordability	F/A; A/S		Western	\$500,000	1.50 2 years	TBD
Scaling Technology-Assisted Skill-Building in Rural Areas	A/S; W/S		Western	\$1 million	1.5 3 years	WCET
Western Postsecondary Data Users Network	A/S; W/S; A		Western	\$50,000	.50 6 months	Western states
Improving Policy and Practice to Support Behavioral Health on Campus	A/S; W/S		Western	\$100,000	.25 Single convening	Behavioral Health Program
Dual Credit Research and Implementation Network	F/A; A/S		Western	\$400,000	2.0 2 years	TBD
Data with a Purpose	W/S; A		National	\$497,475	.05 2 years	Strada Education Network
A Hole in State Policy: Alternative Providers in Postsecondary Education	A/S; W/S; T/I; A		Western	\$975,000	2.5 3 years	WCET, TBD
Recognizing Learning: Further Study of Prior Learning Assessment	A/S; W/S		Western/ National	\$200,000	1.5 2 years	CAEL
A Second Chance at Success: Reducing the Fiscal and Social Impact of Recidivism Through Inmate Education and Re-entry Programs	A/S; W/S		Western	\$2.5 million	2.0 3 years	TBD
Improving Credential Information in the West	A/S; W/S; T/I; A		Western	\$50,000	0.1 2 years	MHEC, National Science Foundation, Credential Engine
Serving Student Soldiers of the West	A/S; W/S		Western	\$1 million	1.35 3 years	Behavioral Health Program

COVID-19 Reengagement Network: WICHE will partner with states and postsecondary institutions to develop and implement targeted plans to reengage students who have stopped out (or are considering doing so) because of COVID-19 and its related impacts on school, the economy, and students' lives. The project will identify high-impact supports for returning students that correlate with increased credential completion; develop effective and aligned policy and practice for reaching and reengaging these students in concert with states, postsecondary systems, postsecondary institutions, employers, and local leaders; and measure the impact of these efforts.

Building Evidence for Scale: Policy and Practice Solutions for Adult Learners: Building on WICHE's Adult College Completion Network (which concluded in 2016) and other work related to adult learners, WICHE proposes to leverage its existing membership and activities to pursue new approaches to achieve four objectives: 1) build the evidence base for effectively serving adult learners, 2) facilitate collaboration among network members, 3) share scalable solutions across the field, and 4) link adult college completion work with the broader equity agenda. WICHE will also seek to partner with states to increase the number of

adults with a postsecondary credential of value. To accomplish that goal, the project will identify high-impact supports for adult learners that correlate with increased credential completion; develop effective and aligned policy and practice for serving adult learners in concert with states, postsecondary systems and institutions, employers, and local leaders; and measure the impact of initiatives aimed to increase adult postsecondary credential completion to drive continuous improvement.

Evaluation and Research Partnerships: Western states are implementing many new innovative policies and programs aimed at improving student outcomes. Examples include developmental courses, summer bridge programs, dual and concurrent enrollment, and efforts to decrease “summer melt.” The Institute for Education Sciences (IES) and other funders offer grants to support partnerships between education agencies and research entities that produce usable information for states and help advance overall knowledge in the field. WICHE is interested in bolstering state efforts to improve access and success by engaging in partnerships wherever it is useful to those states and where it fits within WICHE’s mission. One immediate opportunity is an IES grant program that supports low-cost, short-duration evaluations of education interventions. Partnering with a state agency (or agencies) to carry out such an evaluation would help address state capacity issues, provide actionable information to the participating state, provide evidence for other states to consider in designing education interventions, and potentially provide opportunities to secure additional funding. WICHE will solicit partner agencies to jointly submit proposals to IES and identify other research and evaluation needs for which WICHE can be of assistance.

Exploratory Research into Programs Designed to Increase Postsecondary Attainment in Idaho: Western states are implementing many innovative policies and programs to increase access to postsecondary education and improve success rates for those who enroll. Recent examples include expansion of dual and concurrent enrollment offerings, changes to state financial aid programs, and reforms in developmental education requirements. Legislators, governors, and institutional leaders (not to mention students and their families) all want assurances that these programs are both effective and a wise use of limited financial and human resources. The Institute for Education Sciences (IES) offers grants for state agencies to partner with research organizations like WICHE to carry out exploratory research leading to rigorous evaluations. WICHE staff, working with the Idaho State Board of Education, have submitted a proposal to IES to begin this work. The project would have direct and tangible benefits for Idaho but would also benefit other WICHE states. Information about the efficacy of innovative programs is valuable not only to the state or institution that enacts the policy or program, but to others in the West (and across the country) that are looking to improve student outcomes. WICHE will carry out (if funded by IES) an evaluation of Idaho’s Advanced Opportunities project or (if not funded) seek other funding opportunities.

Policy Paper Series on Affordability: The Policy Analysis and Research Unit will commission a series of papers focused on policy and practice actions to improve postsecondary affordability. The papers (which will include WICHE as a key author) will aim to provide rigorous, actionable research that is accessible to policymakers.

Scaling Technology-Assisted Skill-Building in Rural and Other Areas of Need: This project, which would be a joint effort of the Policy Analysis and Research unit and WCET, would leverage technology to scale work-based learning to rural and other communities of need by providing underserved students with the training they need to succeed in their local economy’s high-demand fields and the ability to adapt should demand for certain careers change. Specifically, after conducting a landscape analysis of innovative program models of technology-assisted work-based learning opportunities, WICHE would deploy its robust network of state and postsecondary institutional partners across the region to identify pilot sites for project implementation that involves expanding these models. Rural, low-income areas with identified high-demand industry sectors would be priorities for pilot site selection. The project would convene pilot and mentor sites to share lessons learned and craft implementation plans for the pilot sites. The project would incorporate seed funding for small-scale testing of technology-assisted training opportunities with potential for scale, and would rigorously evaluate the process using longitudinal data to inform larger-scale state policy decisions over time.

Western Postsecondary Data Users Network: State education and workforce development agencies continue to improve data systems that have the potential to provide critical information to students and their families, policymakers, and institutional leaders. To take full advantage of these systems, states must have highly competent staff that can analyze the available data and convert it to usable information for improving programs and policies. Additionally, state researchers must have opportunities to explore new areas of research that can drive policy conversations. Barriers to states taking advantage of these data systems include limited opportunities for state postsecondary researchers to engage in professional development; heavy workloads managing existing reporting duties, leaving little time for exploratory analyses; and few chances to network with colleagues in other states to address common problems. WICHE hopes to address these issues by exploring the need for and, if appropriate, establishing a Western Postsecondary Data Users Network, which would convene key state, system, and institutional education and workforce researchers to address common questions, provide technical assistance, and assist in professional development. This network would aim to ensure that Western policymakers have access to high-quality evidence to develop, assess, and improve education and training policies and programs.

Improving Policy and Practice to Support Behavioral Health on Campus: Behavioral health issues have a significant impact on the health and well-being of many traditional-aged students. Additionally, they can be a significant barrier to postsecondary success. There are not currently well-accepted policies and practices for providing support systems on campuses. WICHE is

well-positioned to begin addressing the issue through its policy and behavioral health units. The initial project will be to host a convening of state policymakers and institutional leaders and practitioners to identify policy and practice gaps, as well as potential solutions.

Dual Credit Research and Implementation Network: WICHE will work with state partners to develop common metrics with which to evaluate dual credit programs that include analyses of cost to students and their families, states, school districts, and institutions of higher education. Further, WICHE and its network partners will carry out rigorous quantitative and qualitative research to better understand how these programs operate, where they are successful, and develop actionable recommendations to improve student outcomes.

Data with a Purpose: Building on WICHE's Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange (MLDE), Data with a Purpose would seek to build a bridge between data available through the MLDE and decisionmakers to ensure that the data are effectively used to guide policy and improve practice. Specifically, Data with a Purpose would seek to accomplish two tasks: 1) facilitate state research using multistate data to analyze crucial issues related to postsecondary education and employment and 2) translate this research and analysis into actionable information that can be used to improve state and institutional policies.

A Hole in State Policy: Alternative Providers in Postsecondary Education: In this project, the Policy Analysis and Research Unit will work with WCET and key state partners to develop appropriate frameworks to address the rise of alternative providers of postsecondary education. This work will help ensure states can take advantage of legitimately innovative and disruptive ideas while also protecting students from predatory practices of sub-standard providers. WICHE will also develop and execute a major education campaign to share findings and lessons from these states with policymakers across the country.

Recognizing Learning: Raising Awareness for Scale: Through this work, WICHE will leverage and disseminate research related to competency-based education (CBE) and prior learning assessment (PLA) so that policymakers can make evidence-based decisions. Additionally, staff would develop targeted information campaigns to build understanding of and support for CBE and PLA based on new and extant research. WICHE has substantial expertise in prior learning assessment research and policy through its work on previous Lumina Foundation-funded efforts.

A Second Chance at Success: Reducing the Fiscal and Social Impact of Recidivism Through Inmate Education and Re-entry Programs: The goal of this project is to reduce the fiscal and social impact of recidivism on states by helping former inmates, upon release from the correctional system, to be successful individually and to be productive members of society through effective, comprehensive prison education and re-entry programs.

Improving Credential Information in the West: WICHE will partner with MHEC and Credential Engine to share findings with Western states and territories about efforts to improve information about the different types of credentials offered. The overall aim would be to work with states and territories – where there is demonstrated need and interest – to evaluate the utility of existing credential information platforms and, if appropriate, identify cost and resource savings through collaboration.

Serving Student Soldiers of the West: Policy and Practice Solutions is a project whose goal is to increase access to and success in higher education for members of the military and their families in the Western region.

POTENTIAL FUTURE PROJECTS

Work that staff is considering pursuing

Exploring Strategies for Improving the Delivery of Remedial and Developmental Education Policies and Practices: A project that would build on emerging practices in the field to help states more effectively and efficiently target remedial education to students, particularly adult learners.

Hitting the Ground Running: Leveraging Work-Based Learning to Improve Educational Outcomes and Meet Workforce Demands: The goal of this work would be to help states (and perhaps metropolitan areas) facilitate the development of partnerships among institutions and businesses to ensure effective linkages between the workplace and the classroom through co-op/internship programs.

Impact of Federal Policy on State Budgets and Policy: Several pieces of recent or proposed federal legislation, ranging from tax reform to the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, are likely to have an impact on state budgets and higher education policy. WICHE proposes to engage in work that will keep constituents informed and help policymakers align their policy and practice to better serve students in the West.

Safer Spaces: Aligning Policy and Practice to Reduce Sexual Violence on College Campuses in the West: WICHE hopes to conduct research examining how contemporary policy approaches to sexual-violence prevention at postsecondary institutions are being executed, with the goal of identifying those that research suggests can best reduce the prevalence of sexual violence.

State Policies to Support Housing and Food Security on Campus: Housing and food security are crucial issues for students across the West (and the United States as a whole). While campus-level supports such as food banks and emergency grants and loans can help, this effort would examine state-level policies that can improve outcomes for students, including better alignment of social services and education programs, improved access to benefit programs, and other approaches.

Western Policy Forum: An annual convening designed to advance WICHE's mission by bringing together key postsecondary state, system, and institutional leaders in the Western region to learn about successful strategies around access and success, accountability, finance, workforce, and innovation.

COMPLETED PROJECTS

Work that staff finished in FY 2021

Implementation of WICHE Data Management Plan: WICHE, working with experts from Cooley LLP law firm, developed a strong data management plan that improves policies and practices to increase security and compliance across WICHE's operational and support units. In FY 2022, staff will continue implementing the new plan.

Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange (MLDE): The MLDE project, a follow-up to a successful WICHE pilot project, was aimed at stitching together state longitudinal data systems in order to better track the development of human capital through K-12 and postsecondary education and that capital's deployment in the workforce, while accounting for individual mobility.

Recognition of Learning: WICHE was granted funding to partner with the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) to conduct an environmental scan of policies and practices related to the recognition of prior learning and to evaluate outcomes of students who receive credit for prior learning. This project was jointly funded by Lumina Foundation and Strada Education Network.

WICHE Task Force on Closing Postsecondary Attainment Gaps: The goal of this effort was to catalyze state efforts to close attainment gaps so that all students in the West have the credentials they need to contribute to the regional economy. The Task Force was composed of teams from two Western states (Arizona and Wyoming), each including representatives from higher education, K-12, state government, business and workforce, and local communities. WICHE worked with state teams to conduct state-level policy and practice gap analyses and state-level data gap analyses; host three in-state meetings for each team; and convene three Task Force meetings to facilitate interstate collaboration. The work resulted in a set of regional recommendations for closing attainment gaps applicable across a variety of contexts and state-specific action plans tailored to each participating state's context.

Wyoming Postsecondary Needs Analysis: WICHE was contracted by the Wyoming Community College Commission (WCCC) to help fulfill the organization's statutory obligations to analyze the need for and impact of a new proposed community college district. The funding for this project fell below the threshold required for Commission approval and was approved by the WICHE president. WICHE partnered with NCHEMS and produced a detailed analysis and report showing that if voters in Campbell County approved a new community college district, and the related increase in property tax, there was strong evidence that the new district would be sustainable and have limited negative impacts on the other districts in the state.

Behavioral Health

CURRENT ACTIVITIES Projects and Initiatives

Continuing (or new) work supported by grants and contracts. All work in this category is considered high-priority.

Focus:

F/A Finance and Affordability **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **T/I** Technology & Innovation **A** Accountability

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
COVID-19 Response, Support, and Planning	F/A; A/S; W/S; T/I; A	National	TBD	TBD	TBD
Alaska Psychology Internship Consortium: Interns*	W/S	Western	\$800,000	.25 7/13-6/20	State of Alaska
Alaska Internship Consortium: Technical Assistance*	W/S	Western	\$179,500	.05 10/16-6/20	Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority
Arizona: Evidence-Based Practices Fidelity Monitoring*	W/S; A	Western	\$3,097,101	2.75 6/14-6/20	State of Arizona
Hawai'i Psychology Internship Consortium*	W/S	Western	\$2,995,630	.30 7/13-6/20	State of Hawai'i
Hawai'i Recruitment of School-Based Clinical Psychologists*	A/S; W/S	Western	\$200,000	.25 Ongoing	State of Hawai'i
Idaho Psychology Internship Consortium	W/S; A	Western	\$125,000	.5 2.5 years	State of Idaho
Montana Fidelity Reviews	W/S; A	Western	\$105,000	.30 2 years	State of Montana
Montana Zero Suicide	A/S	Western	\$119,945	.25 5/19-9/21	State of Montana
Mountain Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (MP-MHTTC)	A/S; W/S	Western	\$1,368,730	1.75 5 years	University of North Dakota
National Institutes of Health - Online Publication Update	A/S; W/S	National	\$189,130	.40 9/20-3/22	National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Mental Health
Nevada Psychology Internship Consortium	W/S	Western	\$1,120,537	.50 7/14-8/19	State of Nevada
New Mexico Psychology Internship Consortium	W/S	Western	\$175,000	.50 2.5 Years	State of New Mexico
Oregon Psychology Internship Program	W/S	Western	\$196,958	None 4/14-12/19	State of Oregon & APA
Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP)	A/S; W/S	Western	\$974,767	1.75 4 years	JBS International
Rural Veteran Suicide Prevention	W/S	National	\$6,117,720	2.75 2/15-3/22	Veterans Administration Office of Rural Health & Office of Suicide Prevention
South Dakota IMP(ACT) Fidelity Reviews	W/S	Western	\$197,000	.25 6/15-6/21	South Dakota Division of Behavioral Health

Behavioral Health

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
Utah Psychology Internship Consortium	W/S	Western	\$150,000	.50 2/18-6/20	State of Utah
Western States Decision Support Group (WSDSG): Annual Membership Program	W/S	Western	Varies annually	.20 Ongoing	WICHE member states and territories
* WICHE expects these projects will be renewed, or they have already been renewed, for FY 2022.					

The short- and long-term impacts of the unprecedented **COVID-19** crisis continue to be far-reaching and uncertain. WICHE staff at all levels and in all units are continuing to work to support the region in whatever ways they can, and they will continue to do so in FY 2022. For example, staff have hosted webinars; created a variety of useful resources; convened regular peer-to-peer calls for SHEEOs, academic leaders, and communications professionals; provided guidance for higher education leaders, etc., but the needs continue. Given the changing nature of the situation, it is impossible to identify the specific ways that WICHE will provide support other than to commit to being collaborative and proactive in meeting the needs of our states and territories.

Alaska Psychology Internship Consortium (AK-PIC): Interns: WICHE supports the ongoing operations of the AK-PIC for interns and faculty.

Alaska Internship Consortium (AK-PIC): Technical Assistance: The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority contracts with WICHE to provide technical assistance to the AK-PIC and prepare it to successfully become re-accredited by the American Psychological Association (APA), in the wake of newly revised accreditation standards.

Arizona Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs) Fidelity Monitoring: WICHE partners with the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System to support the implementation and fidelity reviews of four EBPs in the Maricopa County public behavioral health system. WICHE supports the Project Lead and two fidelity reviewers. The project was expanded in FY 2019 to include fidelity reviews of two EBPs in Northern and Southern Arizona.

Hawai'i Psychology Internship Consortium (HI-PIC): WICHE assists the state of Hawai'i in the development and operation of an accredited psychology internship consortium. A primary goal of the internship program is the establishment of a pipeline to build Hawai'i's behavioral health workforce. Three Hawai'i state agencies – the Department of Education, the Department of Health, and the Department of Public Safety – provide funding to support HI-PIC.

Hawai'i Recruitment of School-Based Clinical Psychologists: The Hawai'i Department of Education recently contracted with WICHE BHP to recruit and contract with Clinical Psychologists to fill public school vacancies across the Hawaiian Islands

Idaho Psychology Internship Consortium (ID-PIC): WICHE is assisting the state of Idaho in the development and operation of an accredited psychology internship consortium. A primary goal of the internship program is to establish a pipeline to build Idaho's behavioral health workforce, especially in rural and underserved areas. The Idaho State Board of Education received funding from the Idaho Legislature to support WICHE's assistance in restructuring and expanding an existing unaccredited internship program and pursuing American Psychological Association accreditation.

Montana Fidelity Reviews: The Montana Addictive and Mental Disorders Division has contracted with the WICHE BHP to provide consultation and technical assistance to the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services Addictive and Mental Disorders Division regarding the implementation of their Program for Assertive Community Treatment (PACT). This project includes conducting fidelity reviews for the eight PACT programs operating in October 2020, developing plans and focused training to promote the improvement of services, and consultation on outcomes and dashboard development.

Montana Zero Suicide. The rate of loss of life caused by suicide in Native American communities in Montana is the highest in the nation. The State of Montana has retained WICHE to assist urban and reservation-based Native American primary care clinics in developing protocols and skills to help prevent suicides in Native American communities. WICHE is assisting in assessing the training needs of up to six primary care clinics and their respective communities and is delivering training on the Suicide Prevention Toolkit for Primary Care Practices with a focus on societal and clinical issues specific to Native Americans.

Mountain Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (MP-MHTTC): The MP-MHTTC is a five-year partnership between WICHE and the University of North Dakota to provide comprehensive training, resources, and technical assistance to mental health providers and other practitioners across a six-state area. Funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the center specializes in rural and frontier mental health in Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

National Institutes of Health (NIH) Online Publication Update: The NIH has contracted with the WICHE BHP to provide an update to its publication *Mental Health and Rural America: An Overview and Annotated Bibliography*. The revision will expand the publication's focus to include substance use and addiction, with special emphasis on opioid addiction in rural and frontier areas of the U.S.

Behavioral Health

Nevada Psychology Internship Consortium (NV-PIC): The WICHE BHP assists the state of Nevada in the development and operation of an accredited psychology internship consortium. A primary goal of the internship program is to establish a pipeline to build Nevada’s behavioral health workforce. The Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health and Nevada-WICHE provide support and funding for the BHP’s ongoing development and operations of the Nevada Psychology Internship Consortium.

New Mexico Psychology Internship Consortium (NM-PIC): WICHE is working with partner agencies to develop a doctoral psychology internship consortium for the state of New Mexico. A primary goal of the internship program is to help develop New Mexico’s behavioral health workforce in rural and underserved areas. Through funding from the New Mexico Behavioral Health Services Division, the WICHE BHP will facilitate program development, and help ensure the program meets American Psychological Association accreditation standards.

Oregon Psychology Internship Program: WICHE will continue to assist the Oregon State Hospital Psychology Internship Training Program by providing support for the internship website and technical assistance to help the program comply with accreditation standards.

Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP): WICHE has partnered with JBS international to reduce morbidity and mortality associated with opioid overdoses in high-risk communities by strengthening the organizational and infrastructural capacity of multi-sector consortiums. As a partner in this project, WICHE provides monthly technical assistance to 39 sites aiding in the planning for more intensive efforts in upcoming years.

Rural Veteran Suicide Prevention: WICHE is collaborating with the Denver-based federal Veterans Administration, Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center (MIRECC) to develop and pilot-test a veteran suicide-prevention program for rural communities. In FY 2019, the program included four sites: two in CO, one in MT, and one in NC. In FY 2020, the program expanded by four new sites: NH, TX, and an additional site in MT and NC. When fully implemented, the program anticipates 22 sites located throughout the country.

South Dakota IMP(ACT) Fidelity Reviews: WICHE is continuing to assist the South Dakota Division of Behavioral Health to evaluate the fidelity of the evidence-based practice Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) at community behavioral health clinics in three locations in South Dakota.

Utah Psychology Internship Consortium: WICHE is working with partner agencies to develop a doctoral psychology internship consortium. WICHE will facilitate program development, help ensure the program meets American Psychological Association accreditation standards, and assist with the accreditation process.

Western States Decision Support Group (WSDSG): Annual Membership Program: Since 1985, WICHE has been managing the WSDSG, an information-sharing membership-based network for behavioral-health data and evaluation staff and managers from WICHE states and territories. WICHE manages quarterly conference calls to discuss emerging issues in behavioral health data and system evaluation and provides ongoing support to WSDSG members. WICHE also organizes an annual meeting with training and presentations for WSDSG members to stay apprised of developments and best practices in the field of behavioral health data and evaluation. Funding is based on an annual membership fee of \$6,000.

NEW DIRECTIONS

Projects for which staff is actively seeking funding, prioritized as follows:

Focus:




F/A Finance and Affordability **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **T/I** Technology & Innovation **A** Accountability

Project prioritization:

Relevance (mission-critical) **Opportunity (funding)** **Competence (staff/consultants)**

Project Title	Focus	Priority	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
Guam Psychology Internship Consortium	A/S		Western & Pacific Territories	\$250,000	.50 2.5 years	The U.S. Territory of Guam
Rural Veteran Suicide Prevention (seeking additional resources to develop a Community Coach training curriculum and to recruit and support 12 additional communities)	A/S; W/S		National	\$566,000	1 year	Veterans Administration Office of Rural Health & Office of Suicide Prevention

Behavioral Health

Project Title	Focus	Priority	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
Alaska Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Screening & Diagnostic Telehealth Feasibility Study	A/S; W/S		Western	\$101,100	6 months	Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority
Alaska Behavioral Health Aide Program Evaluation	W/S; A		Western	\$883,557	1.05 4 years	National Institutes of Health; Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP) (seeking additional staff to support additional communities)	A/S; W/S		Western	\$214,868	1.5 1 year	JBS International

Guam Psychology Internship Consortium: The WICHE BHP will partner with the U.S. Territory of Guam to develop an accreditable psychology internship consortium to serve Guam and CNMI and build the behavioral health workforces there. As has been accomplished in Alaska, Hawai'i, Nevada, and Colorado, WICHE will guide all phases of the development of a psychology internship consortium to both attract and retain qualified and highly trained behavioral health professionals in the territories.

Rural Veteran Suicide Prevention: WICHE is collaborating with the Denver-based federal Veterans Administration, Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center (MIRECC) to develop and pilot-test a veteran suicide-prevention program for rural communities. When fully implemented, the program anticipates 22 sites located throughout the country. WICHE has proposed additional funding from the VA to recruit and support an additional 12 sites in FY 2021-22. Additionally, WICHE proposes developing a TWV Coaches training curriculum for use by the VA.

Alaska Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Screening & Diagnostic Telehealth Feasibility Study: The WICHE BHP is seeking to partner with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority to conduct a business case/feasibility analysis to identify an optimal and sustainable telehealth/telemedicine model of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) screening and diagnosis in Alaska.

Alaska Behavioral Health Aide Program Evaluation: Development of an NIMH R01 Research Proposal in collaboration with the Center for Alaska Native Health Research (CANHR) and the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC). This project will evaluate the behavioral health aid program focusing on efficacy, implementation, and best practices. As behavioral health workforce issues continue to grow in tribal areas, this research has the potential to significantly influence the development of new programs across the West.

Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP): As a partner in this project, WICHE provides monthly technical assistance to 39 sites aiding in the planning for more intensive efforts in upcoming years. WICHE has submitted a funding request to support assistance for another 18-20 sites.

POTENTIAL FUTURE PROJECTS

Work that staff is considering pursuing

Campus Sexual Assault Prevention: Following an exhaustive review of current best practices in programming and policy, WICHE has developed a program to assess all facets of campus sexual violence prevention efforts and provide campus with leaders feedback about best practices in campus sexual violence prevention to support Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs) in the prevention of sexual assault. WICHE piloted this program at the Northern Marianas College in 2018. WICHE continues to seek additional funding to make these services available to additional IHEs.

Student Wellness and Mental Health: WICHE continues to seek opportunities and funding to partner with the WICHE Policy Analysis and Research office to support and improve college student wellness and mental health, with the goal of improving college completion and degree attainment for all student regardless of race, ethnicity, income, or mental health status.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ): In collaboration with JBS International, WICHE was an awardee for the IDIQ-Domain III-Policy Analysis and Related Projects. Also, in collaboration with the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD), WICHE was an awardee for the IDIQ-Domain V-Technical Assistance and Training Projects. This will allow WICHE, in collaboration with JBS International and NASMHPD, to respond to Task Order requests under these domains over a five-year period.

Previously considered projects that we propose to remove from the workplan: **None at this time.**

COMPLETED PROJECTS

Work that staff finished in FY 2021

Alaska Psychiatric Institute (API) Privatization Feasibility Study: The State of Alaska contracted with the WICHE BHP to conduct a comprehensive study of the feasibility of privatizing the API, examining both quantitative and qualitative data from API, and reviewing psychiatric hospitals from across the country that have been privatized to develop potential operational models. The WICHE BHP is partnering with the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors Research Institute (NRI) to provide a comprehensive project team.

Arizona Mercy Maricopa Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs). WICHE provided training, education, and guidance concerning EBPs and fidelity tools to ensure Mercy Maricopa provider staff was offering high-quality EBPs and ensuring fidelity to identified EBPs protocols. WICHE supported training and technical assistance related to the implementation of the identified EBPs, and evaluation/quality improvement monitoring of the practices.

Arizona Mercy Maricopa Training. WICHE collaborated with Mercy Maricopa Integrated Care (MMIC) to develop a training academy to increase workforce expertise by implementing training strategies for three evidence-based practices: Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT), Transition to Independence (TIP) Model, and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Substance Abuse (CBT-SA).

Building Hope Summit County Treatment Capacity Project: Through a competitive Request for Proposal process, WICHE was awarded a contract with Building Hope Summit County, a non-profit community initiative creating solutions to mental health care system challenges in Summit County, Colo. WICHE is performing a study of behavioral health treatment capacity in Summit County and developing recommendations to improve both the numbers of providers in the area as well as improve their expertise to best serve its residents.

Hawai'i Department of Education: Recruitment, Employment, and Facilitation for School-Based Behavioral Health Professionals: For several years, WICHE's BHP assisted the Hawai'i Department of Education with marketing, recruitment, screening, and referral services for behavioral health professionals to fill public school vacancies across the Hawaiian Islands.

Hawai'i: The Hawai'i Department of Health, Early Interventions Section (EIS) retained the WICHE MHP to analyze differences in reimbursement rates paid by other state EIS agencies across the country for various disciplines (including occupational therapy, speech therapy, etc.). The study included a comparative analysis of salaries for various positions involved in EIS services and adjusted the rates and salaries based on regional cost-of-living differences.

State of Hawai'i Early Intervention Services: The Early Intervention Services Section (EIS) of the Hawai'i Department of Health contracted with the WICHE BHP to conduct a comparative review of early childhood services rates and related professional salaries such as occupational and physical therapies. The study compared Hawai'i rates to those in other analogous states to ensure competitive pay and thus sufficient workforce.

Wyoming Needs Assessment: Wyoming's Department of Health, Behavioral Health Division, contracted with WICHE to assess the state's behavioral health care system. The assessment included analyzing the state's publicly funded behavioral health service delivery system and data collection, assessing existing gaps in service delivery, and exploring options for a new data system.

WCET

CURRENT ACTIVITIES Services and Resources

Continuing work that supports WICHE's mission, supported by the general fund or fees. All work in this category is considered high-priority.

Focus:

F/A Finance and Affordability **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **T/I** Technology & Innovation **A** Accountability

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Staff FTE	Partners
WCET COVID-19 Response, Support, and Planning	A/S; T/I	U.S.	WCET staff	WCET members, Every Learner Everywhere, SAN
Digital Learning Practice	F/A; A/S; T/I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	Members, UPCEA, OLC, Quality Matters, other organizations
Digital Learning Policy	A/S; T/I; A	U.S.	WCET staff	Members, UPCEA, OLC, Quality Matters, other organizations
WCET Annual Meeting and Leadership Summit	A/S; T/I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	Corporate sponsors
WCET Member Service and Support	A/S; T/I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	Nearly 400 member institutions and organizations
WCET Research	F/A; A/S; T/I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	Members, Every Learner Everywhere, OLC, NCOER, SAN
WCET Webcast Series	A/S; T/I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	Various, depending on the topic
wcetMIX (Member Information Exchange) and Adding Member-only Resources	A/S; T/I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	WCET and SAN, and member leadership
WCET Website Update	A/S; T/I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	WCET members and leadership
Consortia and System Digital Learning Leaders	F/A; A/S; T/I	U.S.	WCET staff	Higher education systems and multi-institution consortia
State Authorization Network (SAN)	A/S; A	U.S.	WCET staff	130+ members representing 800+ institutions. Partners: NC-SARA, regional compacts, NASASPS
WCET Steering Committee Annual Priorities	F/A; A/S; T/I; A	U.S.	WCET staff	WCET Steering Committee and other members

The short- and long-term impacts of the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis continue to be far-reaching and uncertain. WICHE staff at all levels and in all units are continuing to work to support the region and WCET members everywhere in whatever ways they can, and they will continue to do so in FY 2022. For example, staff have hosted webinars; created a variety of useful resources; convened regular peer-to-peer calls for SHEEOs, academic leaders, and communications professionals; provided guidance for higher education leaders, etc., but the needs continue. Given the changing nature of the situation, it is impossible to identify the specific ways that WICHE will provide support other than to commit to being collaborative and proactive in meeting the needs of

our states, territories, and WCET members everywhere. As a result of the pandemic, the transition to remote, hybrid, and hyflex learning has fallen to WCET members. As a result, WCET will continue to provide COVID-19 response, support, and planning to both its members and the public. With funding from Every Learner Everywhere the document “Pursuing Regulatory Compliance for Digital Instruction in Response to COVID-19: Policy Playbook” was created to alert administrators and faculty to the differences in certain federal and state policies when a course moves from a traditional face-to-face to digital mode of instruction. WCET will continue to provide compliance updates. Through its discussion forums and virtual events, members will share lessons learned in these pandemic-related digital learning environments.

As a membership organization, WCET has long focused on members sharing their experiences on what has worked or not worked in using **digital learning practice** techniques in higher education, and will continue to offer opportunities to share lessons learned. WCET continues to provide in-depth analysis of **federal and state policy, legislation, and regulations** that have an impact on faculty and students in digital learning. WCET is noted for its expertise on issues including “regular and substantive interaction” for distance education and state authorization of out-of-state activities.

wcetMIX is a digital platform to support communication, collaboration, and resource-sharing among WCET members. Members are invited to opt in to communicate through WCET’s popular WCETNews and WCETDiscuss digital forums. **wcetMIX** is being expanded to include libraries of member-only resources on select topics.

WCET is updating its **website** for the first time in several years. That work is currently under way and is anticipated to be done by early summer 2021.

The leaders of digital learning services for **state system or multi-institutional consortia** will meet monthly to share their unique challenges and solutions to using cooperation to better meet the needs of faculty and students.

The **State Authorization Network (SAN)** is a service (whose dues and membership are separate from WCET’s) for those seeking to comply with state authorization regulations for distance and out-of-state courses and programs. SAN develops resources, provides training on state regulations (especially those not covered by the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement), federal regulations, access to experts, strategies on meeting state requirements, and support for a community of professionals sharing effective practices and latest developments.

Each year, the WCET Steering Committee selects topics on which it wishes to focus in providing insights and resources to assist members. Working groups are formed and they are narrowing down the broad topics to webinars, sessions, blog posts, and other resources that will inform the membership. For the 2021 calendar year, the selected topics are:

- *The post-COVID institution:* How higher education needs to adapt and change. Colleges are facing existential and organizational issues in both the short- and long-term.
- *The quality of digital learning:* How to maintain and increase the quality of instruction, learning, and support services with special emphasis on those courses that transitioned into remote, hybrid, or hyflex learning.
- *Diversity, equity, and inclusion:* How do we overcome inequities in serving students due to race, income, or other barriers?
- *Student return on investment (and how digital learning can help):* How can digital learning assist in controlling the price of higher education and how can we address the value and ROI of college?

CURRENT ACTIVITIES Projects and Initiatives

Continuing (or new) work supported by grants and contracts. All work in this category is considered high-priority.

Focus:

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Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
Every Learner Everywhere	F/A; A/S; T/I	U.S.	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	6.0 2017-22	12 organizations identified as “Network Partners” by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
Every Learner Everywhere Expert Network	A/S; T/I	U.S.	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	ELE staff 2020-21	ISTE and selected content experts

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
Every Learner Everywhere Student Fellowship Program	A/S; T/I	U.S.	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	ELE staff 2021	Achieving the Dream, Digital Promise, SXSW EDU, Intentional Futures
National Consortium of Open Educational Resources	F/A; A/S; T/I	U.S.	William and Flora Hewlett Foundation	1.0 2020-22	Four regional higher education compacts; WICHE Policy Unit

Every Learner Everywhere is a network of 12 partner organizations working collaboratively to help institutions use new technology to innovate in teaching and learning, with the ultimate goal of improving student outcomes for Black, Latinx, and Indigenous students, poverty-affected students, and first-generation students. WCET is an intermediary for the network, which is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and is also one of the partners participating in it. Every Learner is offering an “Expert Network” that provides free short consulting sessions for those interested in the intersection between equity and digital learning. Its new **Student Fellowship Program** will incorporate the voices of Black, Latinx, Indigenous, poverty-affected, first-generation, and other marginalized students into the work to improve student success through digital learning. The fellowship is project-based and will enable undergraduate students to work on interest- and skill-aligned projects and develop meaningful professional relationships and experiences.

WCET leads a national network to coordinate collaboration among the four regional higher education compacts aimed at increasing the adoption, scalability, and sustainability of **Open Educational Resources (OER)**. Together, these partners engage new opportunities to build capacity for policy and effective practice, enable substantial research, develop open education solutions that promote equitable learning, and support coordination across regions to scale and sustain use of OER across the country. The regional compacts are a trusted resource and share a common responsibility for assisting and promoting the adoption and scaling of open education; each has a structure in place with staff highly experienced in policy and practice. WCET serves as the intermediary coordinating among the compacts.

NEW DIRECTIONS



Projects for which staff is actively seeking funding, prioritized as follows:

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Project prioritization:

Relevance (mission-critical) 
Opportunity (funding) 
Competence (staff/consultants) 

Project Title	Focus	Priority	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
Quality Access Program (CourseGateway)	F/A; A/S; T/I		U.S. and beyond	\$6.8 million	4.0 Spring/ Summer 2021	Every Learner Everywhere, WebAIM, WICHE President's Office
A Hole in State Policy: Alternative Providers in Postsecondary Education	A/S; W/S; T/I; A		Western	\$975,000	2.5 3 years	WCET, TBD

The **Quality Access Program** seeks an “owner” to conduct reviews of courseware and software products used in postsecondary digital learning and to be displayed on the website CourseGateway.org. WCET was chosen by Tyton Partners on behalf of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation as one of three finalists to assume the duties of managing the program. Parts of the work will be tightly tied to current Every Learner Everywhere work. WebAIM will partner in advising on and conducting accessibility reviews of the products under consideration.

A Hole in State Policy: Alternative Providers in Postsecondary Education: In this project, WCET will work with the Policy Analysis and Research Unit and key state partners to develop appropriate frameworks to address the rise of alternative providers of postsecondary education. This work will help ensure that states can leverage the advantages of legitimately innovative and disruptive ideas while also protecting students from predatory practices of sub-standard providers. WICHE and WCET will also develop and execute a major education campaign to share findings and lessons from these states with policymakers across the country.

POTENTIAL FUTURE PROJECTS

Work that staff is considering pursuing

Focus:

F/A Finance and Affordability **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **T/I** Technology & Innovation **A** Accountability

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
Orienting and Supporting Online Adjunct Faculty	A/S; T/I	U.S.	\$110,000	TBD	OLC and Every Learner Everywhere

In 2015, WCET conducted a survey of practices in **recruiting, orienting, and supporting online adjunct faculty**. In partnership with the Online Learning Consortium (OLC), WCET will perform an update on select questions from the survey and expand it to examine how institutions develop contingent faculty to address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Research will also be performed on professional development good practices for this underappreciated instructional community.

COMPLETED PROJECTS

Work that staff finished in FY 2021

WCET conducted an environmental scan and updated its strategy documents, including its mission, vision, and values statements. Input from staff and member leadership was key in updating and refining the work.

Due to the pandemic, the in-person **32nd WCET Annual Meeting** was moved from Indianapolis to a virtual environment that was divided into two sections: 1) Oct. 6-15, 2020, focused on Inclusiveness in Higher Education: From Notion to Action and 2) Nov. 2-12, 2020, focused on The Value of Higher Education and What the Future of Higher Education Could Be. The WCET Summit, held virtually on April 6 and May 4, 2021, focused on Practical Considerations for an Uncertain Future. In all of these events, members are learning and sharing the role that digital learning can play in helping address the challenges faced by postsecondary education.

Every Learner Everywhere received funding for its partners to provide multiple services to help institutions make the transition to digital learning as a result of the pandemic. Every Learner Everywhere also conducted the Equity Counts awareness campaign in fall 2020 to alert educators and students about the advances and pitfalls of digital learning in serving Black, Latinx, and Indigenous students, poverty-affected students, and first-generation students.

The **State Authorization Network (SAN)** provides both basic and advanced workshops to educate participants on the details of state authorization regulations and strategies for ensuring that their institutions are in compliance. In addition to the basic and advanced workshops, in FY 2020, SAN provided a virtual seminar, Update on HEA & Federal Rulemaking: The Impact on Institutional Compliance, with experts providing direction to support compliance with new federal regulations. SAN developed an on-demand version of its basic workshop and an implementation handbook to comply with new federal regulations that became effective July 1, 2020. SAN also holds monthly meetings of its member coordinators and monthly “ask the expert” meetings open to the entire membership.

The Z Initiative (Z refers to “Zero Cost”) brought together open educational resources (OER) leaders, champions, legislators, state higher education system staff, and educational technologists – with the goal of developing and promoting best practices and policies on adoption, implementation, scalability, and sustainability of OER and zero-cost curricula. Funded by the William & Flora Hewlett Foundation, this project resulted in the National Consortium of Open Educational Resources.

Collaborations Across WICHE Units

Focus:

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Shaded rows indicate project is currently funded.

Project	Focus	Units (BOLD = committee jurisdiction)	Activity Category	Details of Collaboration
COVID-19 Response, Support, and Planning	F/A; A/S; W/S; T/I; A	All	TBD	The short- and long-term impacts of the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis are far-reaching and uncertain. WICHE staff at all levels and in all units have been working diligently to support the region in whatever ways they can, and they will continue to do so in FY 2022. For example, staff have hosted webinars; created a variety of useful resources; convened regular peer-to-peer calls for SHEEOs, academic leaders, and communications professionals; provided guidance for higher education leaders, etc., but the needs continue. Given the changing nature of the situation, it is impossible to identify the specific ways that WICHE will provide support other than to commit to being collaborative and proactive in meeting the needs of our states and territories.
Increasing Access, Affordability, and Equity Using OER	F/A; A/S	Policy Analysis and Research, WCET	Projects and Initiatives (received funding)	This national consortium supports adoption of open educational resources, adding WICHE Policy Analysis and Research acumen to existing WCET OER efforts under WCET auspices.
Cybersecurity Training for Senior Nontechnical Leaders	T/I	Policy Analysis and Research, WCET	Projects and Initiatives (DHS-funded)	The work entails interplay between WICHE's cyber fellow (under WCET auspices) and Policy Analysis and Research staff.
Evolving Higher Education Policy Issues	A/S; T/I	WCET, Policy Analysis and Research	Projects and Initiatives (variously funded)	Through WCET's Frontiers blog and other avenues, these units contribute to the field by engaging on emerging issues on which WICHE has policy and research insights and context. This often leads to collaboration or co-publication in areas that recently have ranged from state authorization of distance learning, to changes in IPEDS outcome measures data with implications for attainment metrics.
Improving Policy and Practice to Support Behavioral Health on Campus	A/S; W/S	Policy Analysis and Research, Behavioral Health Program	New Directions (seeking funding)	This prospective convening of state policymakers, institutions, and other stakeholders would take advantage of WICHE Policy Unit and Behavioral Health Program expertise alike to identify policy and practice gaps related to campus behavioral health services and systems.
A Hole in State Policy: Alternative Providers in Postsecondary Education	A/S; W/S; T/I; A	Policy Analysis and Research, WCET	New Directions (seeking funding)	In this project, the Policy Analysis and Research Unit will work with WCET and key state partners to develop appropriate frameworks to address the rise of alternative providers of postsecondary education. This work will help ensure states can take advantage of legitimately innovative and disruptive ideas while also protecting students from predatory practices of sub-standard providers. WICHE will also develop and execute a major education campaign to share findings and lessons from these states with policymakers across the country.

Project	Focus	Units (BOLD = committee jurisdiction)	Activity Category	Details of Collaboration
Intermediaries for Scale Partnership	F/A; A/S; T/I	Policy Analysis and Research, Programs & Services	Current Activities	Although not selected to be one of the Intermediaries for Scale grantees of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, WICHE is pursuing multiple partnerships with those organizations that were selected. WICHE has recently been selected by the American Indian Higher Education Consortium to facilitate their efforts to develop an effective data infrastructure and staff capacity. This will in turn aid in AIHEC's work to support Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) and provide leadership on American Indian and Alaska Native higher education issues. WICHE staff will continue to review other opportunities to partner with Intermediaries for Scale where the opportunities fit with WICHE's mission and staff expertise.
Scaling Technology-Assisted Skill-Building in Rural Areas	A/S; W/S	Policy Analysis and Research, WCET	New Directions (seeking funding)	This proposed project would leverage technology (and WCET expertise) to scale work-based learning to serve communities of need.
Serving Student Soldiers of the West	A/S; W/S	Policy Analysis and Research, Behavioral Health Program	New Directions (seeking funding)	This proposed project would increase higher education access and success for members of the military and their families, incorporating distinctive behavioral health attributes of these populations.