

WICHE



Western Interstate Commission
for Higher Education



WICHE WORKPLAN

FY 2023



Introduction



WICHE'S MISSION

WICHE works 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. The Workplan outlines the diverse set of activities, projects, and initiatives that the WICHE Commission (Commission) has prioritized for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2022, all of which are intended to advance WICHE's mission.

The 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 practices 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 implements the Workplan by conceptualizing and managing a vast array of programs, projects, and initiatives, and by developing valuable resources that address the needs of members through four operational units:

- **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 by providing a variety of policy analysis and data resources and leveraging its convening power to foster regional collaboration. The unit leads research projects and collaborative initiatives that focus on open educational resources, the West's workforce challenges, and supporting postsecondary education and completion. WICHE staff provide expertise 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. WICHE is responsible for implementing the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) for the western region. The unit's publication series WICHE Insights explores 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 – 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 be the leader in the practice, policy, and advocacy of digital learning in higher education. Today, WCET supports more than 400 member colleges, universities, state higher education agencies, nonprofits and for-profit companies across the U.S. and Canada, with over 5,000 active users of WCET resources. Dues paid by WCET and WCET State Authorization Network, event income, sponsorships, and grants from strategic partners help enable WCET to be effectively a self-supporting unit. WCET's strategic plan focuses on practice, policy, equity, and community in fulfilling its vision of advancing learner access and success through postsecondary digital learning for a more equitable world.

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. And when appropriate, some initiatives also extend beyond the WICHE region.

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 propose to remove from the Workplan

- **COMPLETED PROJECTS:** work that staff finished in FY 2022.

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 WORKPLAN FY 2023

Current Activities – Ongoing Services and Resources

Continuing work supported by the general fund or by 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
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	.12	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, META Teletherapy, 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	0	1 consortium serving 16 institutions
Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP)	A/S; W/S	Western	1.24	All WICHE members send and/or receive students except Guam, FSM, RMI; 130+ programs at 60+ participating institutions
PSEP Field Assessment and Review	A/S; W/S	Western	.3 FTE complete program review by end of FY 23	Western postsecondary institutions, workforce development agencies, certifying officers
Western Academic Leadership Academy (Academy)	W/S; A	Western	.19 and consultants	Forum and Alliance members

Current Activities – Ongoing Services and Resources (continued)

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 Academic Leadership Forum (Forum) • Professional Development: 2023 Annual Meeting • Collaborative projects	A/S; A	Western	.62	All WICHE members; 52 institutions, 9 systems
Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders (Alliance) • Professional Development: 2022 Annual Meeting • Collaborative projects	A/S; A	Western	.52	All WICHE members; 68 institutions, 8 systems
Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP)	A/S; W/S	Western	.88	All WICHE members; 1,700 programs at 63 institutions
Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE)	A/S; W/S	Western	.88	All WICHE members; 164 participating institutions

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 cyberthreat 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. MHECare now includes META Teletherapy, which offers teletherapy services for students seeking counseling services.

MHECTECH, a fourth partnership, 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 \$4.31 million in FY21 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 the use of institutional resources.

The **PROFESSIONAL STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM** (PSEP) provides affordable access for students to 130+ healthcare professional programs at more than 60 institutions and in 10 healthcare fields. In 2021-22, 543 students from 10 WICHE states and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands received \$13.7 million (reflecting investment by their home-state legislatures) in tuition benefits through PSEP. Since its 1953 inception, PSEP has helped more than 15,630 students, many of whom return to their home states to fill key healthcare positions.

The **PSEP FIELD ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW** will investigate the current health professions (dentistry, allopathic medicine, occupational therapy, optometry, osteopathic medicine, pharmacy, physical therapy, physician assistant, podiatry, and veterinary medicine) covered by the PSEP program. The inquiry will report on how the current fields meet Western state/territory workforce needs. It will also recommend other professional areas that may meet the region's current or future workforce needs. The field assessment and review will be presented to the Commission after completion.

The **WESTERN ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP ACADEMY** is a year-long professional development program aimed at expanding the pipeline of qualified chief academic leaders for two-year and 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 Forum and the Alliance, will commence in July 2022. The Academy is funded by registration fees, and Forum and Alliance support. Two-year institutions were added for the summer 2022 cohort only.

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.

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 1,700 master's, graduate certificate, and doctoral programs at 63 participating public universities. In 2021-22, 2,947 students saved an estimated \$43.8 million in tuition through WRGP. The WRGP program-distinctiveness requirement was lifted several years ago, 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 last

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 46,170 students an estimated \$503 million in tuition in 2021-22. Currently, 164 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 & 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 General Fund support (approved at Nov. 2020 Commission Meeting from Programs and Services reserves)	3.25 and consultants (11/20-10/22)	72 institutions in 21 states across the country are members; Institutions in these and several other states are in the exploration stage
			National Science Foundation \$300,000 grant	1.25 and consultants (3/21-2/23)	New Mexico State University and its four community colleges
No Holding Back: Using Data to Review and Revise Administrative Hold Policies among Public Postsecondary Institutions in the Western Region	A/S; F/A	Western	Seeking grant funding from Ascendium Education Foundation and Lumina Foundation	.35 FTE	American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers and members of the Alliance and Forum, Policy Analysis and Research, MHEC, NEBHE
WICHE Academy for Leaders in the Humanities	A/S; W/S	Western	Andrew W. Mellon Foundation	1.20 FTE	Western postsecondary institutions

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 provides 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 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- 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.

NO HOLDING BACK: Staff members are collaborating with the American Association of College Registrars to assess the use of administrative holds at colleges and universities in the West. WICHE and AACRAO propose a collaboration to develop tools and guidelines that institutions and others can use to monitor administrative holds for equity and general use. The use of administrative holds is ubiquitous at U.S institutions. Recent research found that 99 percent of institutions use registration holds, and 95 percent use transcript holds. However, most institutions do not regularly review or seek alternatives to administrative holds. Moreover, less than half are confident in analyzing the hold data for any equity issues. There is a range of data limitations institutions face: access to the data, what information matters most, and examining their data. This lack of understanding is presumed to be particularly problematic for institutions serving a high percentage of first-generation students.

The **WICHE ACADEMY FOR LEADERS IN THE HUMANITIES** would offer leadership development to tenured humanities faculty members. We will work with the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and other key stakeholders to develop a two-year immersive experience for faculty leaders. These leaders will also attend the 3-day **WICHE INSTITUTE FOR LEADERS (WIL) IN THE HUMANITIES** in Boulder, Colorado. During WIL, they will focus on three key competencies: career planning and development, project management, and organizational design and agility. These leaders will join upper-level academic administration to learn more about day-to-day operations, craft a campus project, receive internal and external mentoring, and develop a new network with the fellows appointed at other institutions.

New Directions

WICHE 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	FOCUS	PRIORITY	GEO SCOPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE/ TIMELINE	PARTNERS
Interstate Passport®	A/S; T/I		National	Seeking grant funding from other foundations and self-sustaining model	TBD	Interstate Passport Network members and potential members
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	TBD	Native American-Serving Nontribal Institutions, Tribal colleges, Tribal education departments, higher education organizations
Seeking additional external funding for a project titled Engineering Pathways for Access, Community, and Transfer (EPACT): A community college, university, and regional compact partnership	A/S, W/S, T/I		Western	\$2 million	.5 FTE; 5 years	WCET, Nevada institutions

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 **COMPACT FOR FACULTY DIVERSITY:** Staff members 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. The 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.

ENGINEERING PATHWAYS FOR ACCESS, COMMUNITY, AND TRANSFER (EPACT): A COMMUNITY COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY, AND

REGIONAL COMPACT PARTNERSHIP: In partnership with the University of Nevada Reno and four community colleges in Nevada, WICHE's programs and services unit is submitting a proposal to the National Science Foundation's Revolutionizing Engineering Departments (NSF RED) grant program. Engineering Pathways for Access, Community, and Transfer (EPACT): A community college, university, and regional compact partnership would enable institutions in Nevada to identify lower division engineering courses missing at the participating community colleges and create online and accelerated in-person laboratory alternatives. Additionally, a set of engineering courses would be redesigned to include Indigenous ways of knowing. All of these courses would be made available in an online course exchange. Instructors from University of Nevada Reno will serve with community college faculty on a Committee for Teaching Excellence to develop courses, teach courses, and mentor students. WICHE's programs and services unit would have primary responsibility for managing the online course sharing platform's development. WCET will conduct focus group research and a literature review and develop recommendations for best policies and practices related to online course sharing. Both units will tap our extensive networks to provide professional development workshops on course design and redesigning courses to include indigenous ways of knowing and developing mentoring programs to better support native students in STEM.

Projects to be Removed from Workplan

Work that staff previously considered pursuing but now proposes to remove from the Workplan.

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	FOCUS	PRIORITY	GEO SCOPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE/TIMELINE	PARTNERS
Online Course Exchange – FlexPATH Alliance	A/S; T/I	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	National	Grant request pending: \$1,416,883 National Science Foundation subaward (5 years) The FlexPATH grant was not funded.	1.90	University of Nevada, Reno; New Mexico State University; University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign; and their respective community colleges

Potential Future Projects

Work that staff is considering pursuing and bringing to the WICHE Commission (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 2022:

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- 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 providing 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 WORKPLAN FY 2023

Current Activities – Ongoing Services and Resources

Continuing work 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
Benchmarks: WICHE Region	F/A; A/S; W/S; A	Western	.025	N/A
Legislative Advisory Committee	F/A; A/S; W/S; T/I; A	Western	.25	All WICHE members
Peer-to-Peer Virtual Convenings	F/A; A/S; W/S; T/I; A	Western	.15	All WICHE members
Regional Fact Book for Higher Education in the West	F/A; A/S; W/S; 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
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 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 (PARAD), the Benchmarks data dashboard now includes state information as well as regional metrics.

The **LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE** (LAC) informs the WICHE Commission (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.

As the pandemic appears to be winding down and reaching a new endemic phase, Policy Analysis and Research unit staff will continue to provide support to the region through regularly scheduled **PEER-TO-PEER VIRTUAL CONVENINGS** on federal funding issues, campus responses, and policy approaches to address the long-term impacts of COVID-19 and other relevant policy issues.

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 released 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 and is examining the overall utility of the full suite of data resources.

WICHE will continue building out **STATE POLICY AND DATA PROFILES** that capture state and territory postsecondary contexts. The development of the Policy Analysis and Research Database (PARAD) will enable the Policy unit to provide more detailed and relevant information specific to each WICHE member. WICHE has been consulting with key stakeholders in the West about how our data resources can be most useful and expects to begin rolling out these new profiles in FY 2023.

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, territory, and the region over the past one, five, and 10 years, as well as what proportion of total tuition and fees they represent.

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 2023 will likely continue to focus on COVID-19 recovery with particular attention to enrollment declines and potentially worsening equity gaps due to changes in college-going behavior.

The **WICHE STATE AUTHORIZATION RECIPROCITY AGREEMENT** (W-SARA) provides a platform for Western states and territories – upon application and demonstration of specified criteria – to 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 and territories within their respective regions. The four regional SARAs are connected through an interregional 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	\$450,000	2.25 FY23-24	Hewlett Foundation, WCET, MHEC, NEBHE, SREB
Support for the Wyoming Innovation Partnership	A/S; W/S; T/I	Western	\$228,000	1.05 FY22-23	Wyoming Community College Commission
Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates	A/S; W/S	National	\$50,000	.25 in FY23	TBD
Oregon Council of Presidents and Oregon Community College Association Landscape Study	F/A; A/S; W/S	Western	\$25,000	.075 in FY22 & FY23	NCHEMS
Advance CTE Policy Roundtables	A/S; W/S; T/I	Western/ National	\$20,000	.05 FTE in FY22 and FY23	AdvanceCTE, states, SREB, MHEC, NEBHE
Intermediaries for Scale Partnership	F/A; A/S; T/I	National	\$60,000	.1 FTE in FY22 and FY23	American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC), 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. This effort started in FY 2021 and WICHE expects additional funding to continue this work into FY 2024. There is significant collaboration and coordination across regions with WCET serving as the “backbone” of the effort.

SUPPORT FOR THE WYOMING INNOVATION PARTNERSHIP:

WICHE has been contracted by the Wyoming Community College Commission to provide project management for this broad initiative that will seek to modernize and focus Wyoming’s efforts to

develop a resilient workforce and economy. The effort aims to better align Wyoming's economic development agenda by increasing collaborations between state entities and ultimately local partners.

KNOCKING AT THE COLLEGE DOOR: The Policy Analysis and Research unit released the 10th edition of state-by-state forecasts of high school graduates in December 2020. During FY 2023, 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 socioeconomic status.

OREGON COUNCIL OF PRESIDENTS AND OREGON COMMUNITY COLLEGE ASSOCIATION LANDSCAPE STUDY: WICHE has been contracted by NCHEMS to participate in an environmental scan of postsecondary education in the state and to assess the ways in which policy and practice can be improved to serve the needs of the state and its residents more effectively. WICHE is providing data analysis and participating in stakeholder interviews and focus groups.

ADVANCECTE POLICY ROUNDTABLES: WICHE received a small subgrant from AdvanceCTE to help convene policy roundtables focused on enhancing Career and Technical Education (CTE) in the West and across the nation. WICHE is assisting by convening virtual roundtables that will focus on key policy and practice issues and will participate as a thought partner in AdvanceCTE's efforts to develop a broad set of recommendations for states and others.

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

WICHE 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	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 - 2million	1.75 4 years	TBD

New Directions (continued)

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

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

PROJECT	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

New Directions (continued)

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

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

PROJECT	FOCUS	PRIORITY	GEO SCOPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE/TIMELINE	PARTNERS
Recognizing Learning: Raising Awareness for Scale	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
Cybersecurity Training for Senior Nontechnical Leaders	T/I		Western	\$100,000	2 years	WCET, Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency
Policy and Practice Solutions for Workforce Shortages	A/S; W/S; T/I		Western	\$400,000	2 years	TBD

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 WICHE members, 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. The project will also seek to partner with WICHE members and other key stakeholders 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 WICHE members, postsecondary systems and institutions, employers, and local leaders; and measure the impact of initiatives aimed at increasing adult postsecondary credential completion to drive continuous improvement.

EVALUATION AND RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS:

WICHE members 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 WICHE members and help advance overall knowledge in the field. WICHE is interested in bolstering efforts to improve access and success by engaging in partnerships wherever it is useful 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 WICHE members to carry out such an evaluation would help address capacity issues, provide actionable information to the participants, 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:

Flowing from the previous item on Evaluation and Research Partnerships, WICHE has recently completed an evaluation of Idaho’s dual credit funding model. This work identified numerous potential avenues for further research that meets Idaho’s needs and can inform all WICHE members about effective policies. Information about the efficacy of innovative programs is valuable not only to the WICHE member 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 additional research where opportunities and funding are available and the research meets Idaho’s needs.

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 AREAS AND OTHER COMMUNITIES 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 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: 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, territories, and freely associated states must have highly competent staff that can analyze the available data and convert it to usable information for improving programs and policies. Additionally, researchers must have opportunities to explore new areas of research that can drive policy conversations. Barriers to 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 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 system and institutional education and workforce researchers, as well as key staff from WICHE members, 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-age students. Additionally, they can be a major 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 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 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 decisionmakers and data available through the MLDE 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 policy and practice.

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 partners to develop appropriate frameworks to address the rise of alternative providers of postsecondary education. This work will help ensure WICHE members 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 project participants 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 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 WICHE members and territories about efforts to improve information about the different types of credentials offered. The overall aim would be to work with WICHE members – 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.

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 members to provide training for institutional non-technical leaders for cyber protection. This initiative was previously approved by the Commission, but paused during the height of the pandemic due to the inability to convene in person. Staff will look to relaunch this effort in FY 2023.

POLICY AND PRACTICE SOLUTIONS FOR WORKFORCE SHORTAGES:

As part of its general efforts to support COVID-19 recovery (discussed above), the Policy unit began convening key staff from WICHE members to focus on ways to address short- and long-term workforce shortages in health fields using general fund dollars. Staff has developed a broader proposal to carry out a project that would implement solutions being developed while focusing on building a strong research base into effective and sustainable long-term policy and practice.

Potential Future Projects

Work that staff is considering pursuing:

HEALTH WORKERS IN THE WEST – MEETING SHORT- AND LONG-TERM WORKFORCE CHALLENGES:

WICHE proposes a project to work collaboratively with members and other key stakeholders to identify and address systemic barriers to increasing the supply of workers in key health occupations.

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 WICHE members 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 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 and territorial 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- and territory-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 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 2022:

DATA FOR THE AMERICAN DREAM: WICHE was 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 underemployed individuals. This effort drew heavily on WICHE expertise developed through the Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange and resulted in a number of briefs focused on ways to better use data and information to guide students.

EVALUATION OF IDAHO’S DUAL CREDIT PROGRAMS:

WICHE received a small contract in FY 2022 to carry out an evaluation of Idaho’s dual credit program as funded through Advanced Opportunities. WICHE prepared a comprehensive evaluation and offered testimony on the results to the state’s House and Senate education committees.

INTERMEDIARIES FOR SCALE PARTNERSHIP WITH THE AMERICAN INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIUM:

WICHE completed its initial work to support AIHEC’s knowledge-management efforts as funded through the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Based on that initial work, AIHEC selected WICHE (working with NCHEMS) to carry out further work in support of its knowledge management infrastructure.

WCET WORKPLAN FY 2023

Current Activities – Ongoing Services and Resources

Continuing work supported by WCET dues, event fees, 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	STAFF FTE	PARTNERS
WCET Member Service and Support	A/S; T/I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	Nearly 400 member institutions and organizations
Digital Learning Practice	F/A; A/S; T/I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	WCET Members, NCOER, Every Learner Everywhere, other organizations
Digital Learning Policy	A/S; T/I; A	U.S.	WCET staff	WCET Members, SAN, NCOER, OLC, Quality Matters, other organizations
WCET Annual Meeting	A/S; T/I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	Corporate sponsors
WCET Leadership Summit	A/S; T/I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	Corporate sponsors
WCET Webcast Series	A/S; T/I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	Various, depending on the topic
WCET Research	F/A; A/S; T/I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	WCET Members, Every Learner Everywhere, SAN, NCOER, OLC
wcetMIX (Member Information Exchange) and Adding Member-only Resources	A/S; T/I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	WCET, SAN, and member leadership
System and Consortia 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; T/I; A	U.S.	WCET staff	129 members representing ~ 835 institutions. Partners: Regional compacts, NASASPS, NC-SARA
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. As a result of the pandemic, much of the work to transition courses to remote, hybrid, and hyflex learning has fallen to the staff that WCET serves at its member institutions. As a result, WCET will continue to provide COVID-19 response, support, and planning to both its members and the public.

WCET MEMBERSHIP SERVICE AND SUPPORT has long focused on members sharing their experiences on innovations and advances in using **DIGITAL LEARNING PRACTICE** techniques in higher education and will continue to offer opportunities to share lessons learned. To complement the popular WCET Frontiers blog, the WCET Frontiers podcast series was introduced in late 2021. This podcast features a guest host speaking with interviewees about solutions and innovations in the practice and policy of digital learning in higher education and currently includes episodes on building virtual community, virtual labs, humanizing learning, and using STEM learning to address sociopolitical issues.

WCET and SAN continue to provide in-depth analysis of **DIGITAL LEARNING POLICIES** (federal, state, legislative, and regulatory) that have an impact on faculty and students in using technology in their courses. WCET and SAN are noted for their expertise on policy issues including “regular and substantive interaction” for distance education, state authorization of out-of-state activities, and out-of-state professional licensure regulatory requirements.

Due to the pandemic, the 33rd **WCET ANNUAL MEETING** was conducted virtually on November 2, 2021, and included sessions on equitable teaching and learning practices, humanizing learning, online student services, educational technology adoption considerations, post-pandemic higher education, empowering learners through blockchain, student experiences in online courses, listening to the student voice, and digital learning transformation strategies. The **WCET SUMMIT**, held virtually on April 6 and May 4, 2021, focused on “Practical Considerations for an

Uncertain Future,” including “The EdTech Gambit” and “WCET Discovery: Where No Educator Has Gone Before.” In all of these events, members learned about and shared the role that digital learning can play in helping address the challenges faced by postsecondary education.

WCET continues to offer a **WEBCAST SERIES**. Topics this past year included how higher education is preparing for the new normal, e-learning design challenges, the future of online leadership, digital learning policies, and practices and policies to better support online adjunct faculty. The last webinar was based on **WCET RESEARCH** conducted by WCET in partnership with the Online Learning Consortium and Every Learner Everywhere with a survey of institutional practices to support online adjunct faculty.

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. SAN also uses wctetMIX to support communication and sharing among its members. During FY 2022, wctetMIX was expanded to include member-only resources in the wctetMIX Library. Additional member-only resources are planned for FY 2023 in high-need areas such as OPMs, microcredentials, and digital learning categorization.

The **STATE SYSTEM OR MULTI-INSTITUTIONAL CONSORTIA DIGITAL LEARNING LEADERS** continue to meet monthly to share their unique challenges and solutions in using cooperation to better meet the needs of faculty and students at their member institutions

The **STATE AUTHORIZATION NETWORK (SAN)** is a service (whose dues and membership are an add-on to WCET’s) for those seeking to comply with state authorization, professional licensure, and other regulations encountered when serving students in other states via distance education or any modality. 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. During FY 2023, SAN plans to develop two new online tools including a six-week, cohort-based, online semi-synchronous Basics of State Authorization course to replace the Basics Workshop and an on-demand tutorial program for new SAN members to learn about SAN resources that will replace the current Newcomers Exercise. Resources will be expanded to include a series of one-page briefs to help users quickly understand various state authorization-related topics. Research will be expanded to address state data privacy laws, distance education regulations in Canada and Mexico, catastrophic-event policies, and interstate employment laws.

Each year, the **WCET STEERING COMMITTEE** selects **ANNUAL PRIORITIES** 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 2022 calendar year, the selected topics are:

- **Quality and equity in digital learning:** As digital learning grows, we are being challenged to maintain quality in serving a broader range of students, introducing issues such as the digital divide, disparate success rates among student populations, and the increased use of synchronous remote learning.

- **Microcredentials/badges:** The use of microcredentials outside of traditional higher education has grown exponentially and their acceptance by industry has followed. What should institutions be doing to maintain their relevancy in a changing world of credentialing and how can institutions assure equity in the access and completion of microcredentials?
- **Categorizing the continuum of digital learning and instruction:** It is an understandable desire to want to put digital learning courses into neat packages, but there are only loose definitions of the variety of forms of digital pedagogy. Digital learning is a continuum from no use of technology to the full use of technology in a course. In communicating with students, how can institutions best communicate the technical needs and academic experiences that their students will encounter? WCET is also considering a partnership with the Canadian Distance Learning Research Association on a survey regarding the definitions used to describe different modalities in Canada and the U.S.

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
Every Learner Everywhere	F/A; A/S; T/I	U.S.	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	7.8 2017-22	12 organizations identified as “Network Partners” by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
Every Learner Everywhere Equity Advisory Board	A/S; T/I	U.S.	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	ELE Staff 2022	Five higher education professionals selected by the Every Learner backbone and Steering Committee to serve a one year term.
Every Learner Everywhere Student Fellowship Program	A/S; T/I	U.S.	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	ELE staff 2021-22	Achieving the Dream, Digital Promise, Intentional Futures
National Consortium of Open Educational Resources (NCOER)	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. During FY 2022, Every Learner offered a number of field-facing services including a series of webinars with partner organizations such as Achieving the Dream, American Public and Land-Grant Universities, and Digital Promise. Webinar topics included information on adaptive learning, equitable pedagogical practices in digital learning,

evidence-based teaching practices for digital learning, and information on the development of faculty communities of practice.

Every Learner Everywhere’s **EQUITY ADVISORY BOARD** will consist of five career higher-education professionals chosen by the Every Learner Everywhere staff and Steering Committee to assist Every Learner in better centering equity considerations in its work.

Every Learner Everywhere’s **STUDENT FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM** incorporates 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 enables undergraduate students

to work on interest- and skill-aligned projects and develop meaningful professional relationships and experiences.

WCET leads the **NATIONAL CONSORTIUM FOR OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES** as a national network that coordinates 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 in opportunities to build capacity for policy and effective practice, enable research, develop open education solutions that promote equitable learning, and support coordination across regions to scale and sustain use of OER across the country. WCET serves as the intermediary coordinating among the compacts.

New Directions

WICHE 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	FOCUS	PRIORITY	GEO SCOPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE/ TIMELINE	PARTNERS
A Hole in State Policy: Alternative Providers in Postsecondary Education	A/S; W/S; T/I; A	■ ■ ■	Western	\$975,000	2.5 3 years	WICHE Policy Unit, WCET
SAN: Additional Content Areas	A/S; T/I; A	■ ■ ■	National	Internal		Professional licensing agencies, accreditors

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.

The State Authorization Network (SAN) is expanding into **ADDITIONAL CONTENT AREAS**, especially around issues that have an impact on institutions serving students, employing faculty or staff, or providing services in states other than where the institution is domiciled. Examples include deeper work on the requirements for state professional licensing agencies, accrediting agencies, and select other countries. This work is mostly being funded through internal investment but may lead to additional funding opportunities.

Completed Projects

Work that staff finished in FY 2022:

WCET completed a thorough redesign of its **WEBSITE**. This work allowed WCET to reorganize and improve its content, implement a better search tool, allow for easier updating of content, and transition to a newer version of the blog tool to serve WCET Frontiers.

WCET created several member-only resources, including one-page topic overviews called **CLOSER LOOKS**, which provide background and helpful resources on emerging topics such as alternative assessments, blockchain/distributed ledger technology in education, professional licensure notifications, virtual labs, and hyflex courses.

WCET, in collaboration with OLC and Every Learner Everywhere, completed **ORIENTING AND SUPPORTING ONLINE ADJUNCT FACULTY**. This study updated a 2015 study that WCET and Learning House completed that examined the institutional policies in hiring and training adjuncts teaching online courses. The 2022 update to the study focused on institutional policies associated with training online adjuncts as well as the challenges and promising pedagogical practices associated with high-quality digital instruction.

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 received funding to develop, in conjunction with its partners, services for institutions to improve equity-centered digital learning. Among the services provided included live webinars, blended workshops, and research partnerships that reached nearly 5,000 participants in all 50 states and over a dozen countries. Every Learner Everywhere also developed a Student Fellows program that allows students to provide insight into digital learning and equity, and gain important workforce-related skills while working on projects with partner organizations.

The **STATE AUTHORIZATION NETWORK (SAN)** celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2021 with a virtual celebration that included special guests who were instrumental in the initial development of compliance strategies to address state authorization. SAN provided 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 with existing regulations as well as understanding the effective practices in organizing compliance within the institution. As a result of the pandemic, both workshops were moved to the virtual environment. 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 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 also held monthly meetings of its member coordinators and monthly "ask the expert" meetings open to the entire membership. Finally, SAN provided a webinar on the federal rulemaking process as well as webinar collaborations with WCET to address policy and compliance issues.

The **NCOER ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS GRANT** was additional funding given to WCET in support of the OER staff of the four regional higher education compacts. The goal of the grant was to increase training and discussions about the opportunities and barriers encountered in centering equity concerns in working with compact member states on OER practice and policy. NCOER also assisted in the successful launch of the SREB OER and Dual Credit Initiative as well as successfully coordinating the collaboration of the regional compacts to achieve the goals set forth in their individual grants.

WCET and SAN staff followed **EMERGING FEDERAL POLICIES** regarding digital learning. Members and the public were informed of these emerging laws and regulations and, in some cases, were invited to advocate for their opinions on proposed rules. Examples include the regulatory waivers provided for

COVID, the Monthly Housing Allowance for Veterans who study at a distance being less than those who attend on campus, the U.S. Department of Education’s Negotiated Rulemakings on several issues including new professional licensure rules, and Congressional legislation to exclude distance education from the expansion of the Pell Grant for short-term programs.

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
Understanding the Digital Divide in WICHE States and Territories	F/A; A/S; T/I	WICHE States and Territories	TBD	TBD	WCET, WICHE Policy, TBD

As more and more of our society requires access to the internet, gaps in digital access, be they from a lack of infrastructure or a lack of financial resources, are becoming more consequential. In partnership with WICHE’s Policy unit WCET will research the state of the digital divide in WICHE states and territories in an effort to understand both existing access gaps as well as identifying promising practices to address those gaps.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH WORKPLAN FY 2023

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
Alaska Psychology Internship Consortium: Interns*	W/S	Western	\$100,000	7/22-6/23	State of Alaska
Alaska Internship Consortium: Technical Assistance*	W/S	Western	\$20,000	.05 7/22-6/23	Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority
Arizona: Evidence-Based Practices Fidelity Monitoring*	W/S; A	Western	\$409,250	2.75 7/22-6/23	State of Arizona
Guam Psychology Internship Consortium	W/S	Western & Pacific Territories	\$250,000	.50 2.5 years	The U.S. Territory of Guam
Hawai'i Psychology Internship Consortium*	W/S	Western	\$1,049,238	.30 7/22-6/23	State of Hawai'i
Hawai'i Recruitment of School- Based Clinical Psychologists*	A/S; W/S	Western	\$100,000	Ongoing	State of Hawai'i
Idaho Psychology Internship Consortium*	W/S; A	Western	\$125,000	.50 7/22-6/23	State of Idaho
Montana Crisis System	W/S; T/I	Western	\$477,795	.50 12/21-9/22	State of Montana
Montana Fidelity Reviews*	W/S; A	Western	\$152,250	.50 7/22-9/23	State of Montana
Mountain Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (MP-MHTTC)	A/S; W/S	Western	\$554,193	1.75 5 years	University of North Dakota

PROJECT	FOCUS	GEO SCOPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE/ TIMELINE	PARTNERS
National Institutes of Health – Behavioral Health Aide Assessment	A/S; W/S	Western	\$190,232	1.0 4 years	AK Native Tribal Health Consortium’ Northwest Indian College; University of AK – Anchorage
National Institutes of Health - Online Publication Update	A/S; W/S	National	\$58,627	.40 9/20-9/22	National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Mental Health
Nevada Psychology Internship Consortium	W/S	Western	\$245,057	.50 8/22-8/23	State of Nevada
New Mexico Psychology Internship Consortium	W/S	Western	\$175,000	.50 2.5 Years	State of New Mexico; Indian Health Service
Oregon Psychology Internship Program*	W/S	Western	\$7,200	7/22-6/23	State of Oregon
Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP)	A/S; W/S	Western	\$730,967	3.0 9/22-9/23	JBS International
Rural Veteran Suicide Prevention	W/S	National	\$2,935,368	4.0 4/22-3/23	Veterans Administration Office of Rural Health & Office of Suicide Prevention
South Dakota IMP(ACT) Fidelity Reviews*	W/S	Western	\$49,000	.25 6/22-5/23	State of South Dakota
South Dakota Psychology Internship Consortium	W/S	Western	\$175,000		State of South Dakota
University of Wisconsin Technical Assistance	A/S; W/S	National	\$99,998	.50 4 years	University of Wisconsin
Utah Psychology Internship Consortium*	W/S	Western	\$6,720	7/22-6/23	State of Utah
Western States Decision Support Group (WSDSG): Annual Membership Program	W/S	Western	Varies annually	.10 Ongoing	WICHE Member States and Territories

¹ Funding figures reflect FY 2023 estimated revenue by project.

* WICHE expects these projects will be renewed, or they have already been renewed, for FY 2023.

ALASKA PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP CONSORTIUM

(AK-PIC) INTERNS: The WICHE BHP supports the ongoing operations of the AK-PIC for interns and faculty, including its engagement in the Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC) and achievement/maintenance of American Psychological Association (APA) accreditation.

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). The AK-PIC consists of a multi-site consortium of Alaska agencies that maintain at least one supervising psychologist on-site to provide supervision and didactic training to interns.

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.

GUAM PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP CONSORTIUM:

The WICHE BHP has partnered 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 attract and retain qualified and highly trained behavioral health professionals in the territories. Guam-PIC is participating in the 2022 APPIC National Intern Match, and the first cohort of two interns will begin internship in September 2022.

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 CRISIS SYSTEM: The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services contracted with the WICHE BHP to assess and make recommendations regarding Montana's implementation of its Mobile Crisis System, including an assessment of individual crisis stabilization facilities, existing mobile crisis response teams, and its crisis system data reporting and technology solutions. In addition to a high-level statewide assessment, the BHP will also be assessing seven county-based crisis services.

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 its Program for Assertive Community Treatment (PACT). This project includes conducting fidelity reviews for 13 PACT programs operating across the state, developing plans and focused training to promote the improvement of services, and consultation

on outcomes and dashboard development.

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)

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AIDE ASSESSMENT: The WICHE Behavioral Health Program, in collaboration with the Center for Alaska Native Health Research (CANHR) and the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC), was awarded a National Institutes of Health (NIH) research grant. This project will evaluate the behavioral health aide 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.

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.

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 operation 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 New Mexico Department of Health, and the federal Indian Health Services, the WICHE BHP will facilitate program development, and help ensure the program meets American Psychological Association accreditation standards. NM-PIC accepted its first cohort of interns in 2021-22, and its accreditation self-study was submitted in March 2022.

OREGON PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM:

WICHE continues 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 and psychostimulant misuse in high-risk communities by strengthening the organizational and infrastructural capacity of multi-sector consortia. As a partner in this project, WICHE provides technical assistance to designated grantee sites.

RURAL VETERAN SUICIDE PREVENTION –

TOGETHER WITH VETERANS: WICHE is collaborating with the Denver-based federal Veterans Administration, Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center (MIRECC) to develop and implement Together With Veterans, a veteran suicide-prevention program for rural communities. The program became operational in FY 2019, with four initial sites: two in Colorado, one in Montana, and one in North Carolina. Since then, the program has grown to 26 sites that were fully operational in FY 2022. When fully implemented, the program anticipates more than 30 sites located throughout the country, stretching from as far east as New Hampshire and as far west as the Territory of Guam.

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.

SOUTH DAKOTA PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP CONSORTIUM:

The South Dakota Legislature recently passed an appropriation to fund the development of a psychology internship consortium. The Behavioral Health Program will be working the state to identify core partners for the internship, including the South Dakota Human Services Center in Yankton and other community-based partners. WICHE’s work will extend from planning and development to supporting achieving accreditation of the internship program.

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:

WICHE is working in partnership with the University of Wisconsin through a Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grant to provide education and training to graduate students, practitioners, educators, and trainers. These learning collaboratives will focus on the integration of substance use disorder and mental health prevention, treatment, and recovery in rural communities. WICHE will provide expert trainers for a series of six trainings

over the course of 12 weeks, twice a year for the next four years. Many of the expert trainers will be provided in conjunction with the ongoing work of WICHE’s Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP).

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

WICHE 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	FOCUS	PRIORITY	GEO SCOPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE/ TIMELINE	PARTNERS
Sanford Health Psychology Internship Program (North Dakota)	W/S		Western	TBD	2.5 years	Sanford Health

NORTH DAKOTA PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP

CONSORTIUM: The WICHE BHP has been in discussions with Sanford Health in North Dakota to begin work on implementing a new Psychology Internship Consortium (PIC) beginning in the spring of 2022. WICHE will provide technical assistance similar to the numerous other PIC projects across the West. The focus of this PIC will be a doctoral-level internship experience for students who have chosen to focus their work on integrated physical and behavioral health.

Potential Future Projects

Work that staff is considering pursuing:

HAWAII 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. As part of its pandemic-related budget strategy, the state of Hawaii eliminated funding for this contract. However, the workforce need is still critical, and the state has indicated its interest in re-establishing this successful recruitment effort.

HAWAII PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP CONSORTIUM

– EXPANSION: The state of Hawai’i is considering an expansion of the Hawai’i Psychology Internship program by placing additional interns at several new sites, including the Hawai’i State Hospital.

MERCY CARE ARIZONA EVIDENCE-BASED

PRACTICES (EBPS): WICHE is planning to provide training, education, and guidance concerning adult EBPs and fidelity tools to ensure Mercy Care AZ provider staff offers high-quality EBPs and to ensure fidelity to identified EBPs protocols. Additionally, WICHE will provide Evidence Based Practices Training for providers, para-professionals and family members serving infant, child, adolescent and transitional age youth populations with developmental

delays/disabilities, social/emotional disorders, and/or who are engaged in the foster care system.

SOUTH DAKOTA PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP

CONSORTIUM – HUMAN SERVICES CENTER: The WICHE BHP has been in discussions with the state of South Dakota to implement a Psychology Internship Consortium in conjunction with the South Dakota Human Services Center (HSC) and Avera Health System. Plans for this second PIC have received preliminary approval by the South Dakota Legislature, the HSC has begun to identify potential public/private consortium partners.

STUDENT WELLNESS AND MENTAL HEALTH:

WICHE continues to seek opportunities and funding to partner with the WICHE Policy unit to support and improve college student wellness and mental health, with the goal of improving college completion and degree attainment for all students 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 the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD), the WICHE BHP is a candidate for the IDIQ-Domain V -Technical Assistance and Training Projects. This will allow WICHE, in collaboration with 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 2022:

ALASKA NATIVE TRIBAL HEALTH CONSORTIUM, BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AIDE ASSESSMENT:

The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC), in conjunction with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, contracted with the WICHE BHP to assess ANTHC’s Behavioral Health Aide (BHA) Program. The

BHP assessed the efficacy of the BHA training program in the provision of training and technical assistance to Alaska Tribal Health Organizations. The BHP produced a written report emphasizing the strengths of the BHA Program, areas for improvement, and recommended changes.

ALASKA FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER SCREENING & DIAGNOSTIC TELEHEALTH

FEASIBILITY STUDY: The WICHE BHP partnered 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.

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).

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 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 assisted in assessing the training needs of six primary-care clinics and their respective communities, and delivered training on the Suicide Prevention Toolkit for Primary Care Practices with a focus on societal and clinical issues specific to Native Americans.

STATE OF HAWAII' 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.

SOUTH DAKOTA HUMAN SERVICES CENTER

OPTIMAL CAPACITY REVIEW – PHASE I: The South Dakota Department of Social Services contracted with the WICHE BHP to assist the state in establishing the optimal capacity and patient programming at the South Dakota Human Services Center.

OPTIMAL CAPACITY REVIEW – PHASE II: Provided policy guidance, technical assistance and support for the implementation of focused programming and staffing models.

COLLABORATIONS ACROSS WICHE UNITS WORKPLAN FY 2023

Current Activities – Ongoing Services and Resources

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

PROJECT	FOCUS	UNITS (BOLD = COMMITTEE JURISDICTION)	ACTIVITY CATEGORY	DETAILS OF COLLABORATION
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 and territories 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 and territories with policymakers across the country.
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.
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.

Current Activities – Ongoing Services and Resources (continued)

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

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 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 opportunities fit with WICHE's mission and staff expertise.
No Holding Back: Using Data to Review and Revise Administrative Hold Policies among Public Postsecondary Institutions in the Western Region	A/S; F/A	Programs and Services, Policy Analysis and Research	Projects and Initiatives (grant-funded)	WICHE's Programs and Services unit and Policy Analysis and Research unit are collaborating with the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions to provide institutions in the West with tools to (re)evaluate their administrative hold policies to improve student success and to better use their data in policy formation.
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.

* Project is currently funded