

May 25, 2017

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Register for the Next Advancing Career Pathways Regional Meeting!

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education's (OCTAE's) [Advancing Career Pathways](#) project is a two-year federal investment dedicated to strengthening and expanding the role of CTE in career pathways systems development at the state and local levels. As key service providers and stakeholders, CTE programs have an important role to play in building comprehensive career pathways systems.

Under the Advancing Career Pathways project, a series of regional meetings are being held to support states' career pathways systems efforts. These day-long, regional, facilitated working meetings will provide customized technical assistance to state teams. Team members may include CTE state directors; secondary and postsecondary state staff; adult education directors; workforce and economic development leaders; community-based organization representatives; and business and industry representatives.

To date, 19 states have taken advantage of this opportunity. Ten states and one territory participated in the first regional meeting in Chicago on Nov. 14, 2016, and eight states participated in the second regional meeting in Washington, D.C. on May 1, 2017. The next regional meeting will be held in Salt Lake City on June 6, 2017.

Participating state teams will learn about the approaches other state leaders have used to overcome common challenges and barriers to career pathways systems development. With the help of an assigned facilitator for the day, state teams will use the results of career pathways systems self-assessments to address state-identified needs and guide their strategic planning efforts.

To learn more and to register your team for the upcoming Advancing Career Pathways regional meeting in Salt Lake City, visit <http://cpregmtg.manhattanstrategy.com/Meetings/region3.html>.

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OCTAE Briefings at the American Association of Community Colleges Annual Convention

OCTAE's acting assistant secretary, Kim R. Ford, and community college program specialist Erin Berg attended the [97th Annual Convention](#) of the [American Association of Community Colleges](#) April 21–25, 2017, in New Orleans. The conference theme was “Community Colleges: America’s North Star,” in recognition of the guiding role of community colleges in a time of change and transition.

Ford and Berg briefed several AACC commissions, bringing greetings from Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos, who recently called community colleges “[thoroughly student-centered](#)” and “[an essential engine of workforce and economic development](#).” Ford emphasized the Department’s interest in and support of community and technical colleges as equal paths to careers for students. She encouraged commission members and other conference attendees to write, call, or visit the Department to highlight the important work being done at community colleges.

During the commission meetings Berg briefed members on the following OCTAE national activities:

- [Mapping Upward](#) is a technical assistance project supporting four community college networks, composed of 12 colleges, as they work to embed stackable, industry-recognized credentials within technical associate degree programs. It is currently field testing a stackable credentials tool kit that has been developed to help a broad range of stakeholders learn about the program. The tool kit will be available in October 2017.
- The [Minority-Serving Community Colleges Community and Affiliates Community of Practice](#) is growing, and coaches have shared many webinars, resources, and grant opportunities for minority-serving institutions or community colleges on OCTAE’s Literacy Information and Communication System (LINCS) community site. All colleges and individuals looking to support minority and first-generation students are welcome to join the community. To comment in the discussions, [free membership to LINCS is required](#). The project is also offering a series of webinars on topics identified by community members, the fourth of which, taking place on May 31, is [Using Research-Based K–12 Strategies to Enhance Teaching and Learning](#). (See the following column for registration information.)
- [Supporting Student Success: Adult Education and Remedial Education Reform in Community Colleges](#) initiative is a two-year technical assistance effort to support the reform of developmental education at community colleges. Over the past year, the project has used the principles outlined in the MDRC report [Unlocking the Gate](#) to identify successful programs at four community colleges across the United States that are improving alignment between adult and developmental education. Recorded webinars will join existing discussion posts on OCTAE’s LINCS Community site in the [Postsecondary Completion Group](#).

Questions on these projects, or other aspects of OCTAE’s work to support community colleges, can be directed to Erin Berg at erin.berg@ed.gov

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SAVE the DATE- Tuesday, May 31, 2017

Promoting Community College Student Success: Using Research-Based K-12 Strategies to Enhance Teaching and Learning

The Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education is pleased to host the fourth event in its technical assistance for minority serving community colleges initiative webinar series. We invite you to join postsecondary faculty and staff from across the country on May 31 for a discussion on adapting research-based K–12 strategies to promote learning and student retention in community colleges.

May 31, 2017

1–2 p.m. EDT

Register [here](#).

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National Skills Coalition Releases New Fact Sheet: “The Business Case for Upskilling”

According to a new fact sheet recently released by the National Skills Coalition (NSC), [“The Business Case for Upskilling,”](#) “companies that invest in their workers’ skill building can see payoffs not only for the workers themselves, but for the business bottom line.” The publication highlights the NSC’s findings on service-sector workers who possess only limited literacy, numeracy, or digital problem-solving skills.

Among these findings, a majority (58 percent) of these service-sector workers have been with their employer for at least three years, with 39 percent recently pursuing additional education and training. According to the NSC, “companies can capitalize on their employees’ interest in upskilling by facilitating their participation in learning opportunities, including through reducing logistical and other barriers to participation.” Adult education stakeholders and providers are encouraged to visit the [NSC website](#) to access the entire fact sheet and to explore the coalition’s other activities and resources.

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U.S. Department of Education Announces EdSim Challenge Finalists

The Department of Education announced five finalists in the [EdSim Challenge](#), a competition to design the next generation of educational simulations that strengthen career and technical skills.

The challenge called upon the virtual reality, video game developer, and educational technology communities to submit concepts for immersive simulations that will prepare students for the globally competitive workforce of the 21st century. Five finalists were selected out of 249 submissions and announced by the U.S. Department of Education on May 9, 2017.

The finalists are:

1. **Care Western Reserve University:** <http://case.edu/hololens/>
2. **EmbodiedLabs, Inc.:** (<http://www.embodiedlabs.com>)
3. **OctothorpeLLC:** (<http://www.octothorpe.com>)
4. **Osso VR Inc:** (<http://OSSOVR.com/>)
5. **Smart Sparrow:** (<https://www.smartsparrow.com>)

Each finalist will receive \$50,000 and have the opportunity to refine their submission and develop a prototype, as well as receive in-kind contributions. Judges of the prototypes will select an ultimate winner or winners to receive the remaining \$430,000 (and additional in-kind prizes) of the \$680,000 cash prize.

The challenge can be found online [here](#), and followed at www.twitter.com/edprizes.

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Pennsylvania Department of Corrections Hosts Career Pathways Podcast

Pennsylvania Secretary of Corrections [John E. Wetzel](#) recently hosted the [podcast](#) “Bustin’ Walls.” Produced by the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (DOC), the podcast “breaks through the walls and fences of ... state facilities to provide listeners with a real look inside the field of corrections with one of the top DOCs in the nation.” This episode featured an interview with DOC’s career pathways program manager Dorenda Hamarlund, where she highlighted her work to implement a career pathways framework in the state’s prisons. The program is part of a three-year, \$1 million Improved Reentry Education grant that the DOC received from the U.S. Department of Education. Providers of reentry education services are encouraged to visit DOC’s [website](#) to learn more about its work, and to stay current with the information it provides through blogs and podcasts.

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