

SHEEO | ASAP College Completion Coalition Learning Community Project Announcement & Notice of RFP Opening 6/14/23

SHEEO is excited to announce a new project and partnership with City University of New York's (CUNY) Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP). This memo formally introduces the *SHEEO | ASAP College Completion Coalition Learning Community* and serves as background for state teams interested in joining the inaugural learning community cohort. Over the next year, SHEEO will partner with the ASAP | Accelerate, Complete, and Engage (ACE) National Replication Collaborative at CUNY to launch and establish this learning community among state higher education leaders committed to replicating the CUNY ASAP | ACE model at scale to increase college completion rates within their community college sectors. A key objective of this project is to work with states to address racial equity gaps in attainment rates (with a focus on Black and Latinx students) through strategic scaling of the ASAP model. States can express their interest in joining this work by responding to the Request for Proposals (RFP) that will be open from June 14-July 21, 2023. The RFP and supporting materials are available on the [SHEEO website](#).

Background

Raising college completion rates has been a priority of policymakers and higher education leaders across the nation for decades. The [CUNY ASAP | ACE program](#), which provides comprehensive support for students, has emerged as a proven method for increasing college completion rates, especially for students of color served by the programs. Likewise, researchers have rigorously evaluated the outcomes of such interventions. The CUNY ASAP | ACE model may help address these completion issues when scaled across the nation.

What the model looks like

The ASAP | ACE model was established by the City University of New York (CUNY) system in 2007, and was designed to break down barriers to degree completion, particularly for CUNY's low-income students. CUNY ASAP students receive comprehensive support, including:

- full tuition and fee benefits to fill the gap after state and federal aid
- other financial incentives such as textbook support and MetroCards
- wraparound services like intensive, relational advising protocol
- an emphasis on facilitating student inclusion/belonging
- a sophisticated data management infrastructure that encourages student progression and timely completion

These wraparound supports have served more than 88,000 CUNY students and the approach has been shown to [more than double graduation rates](#) for ASAP students over comparison groups in nearly every evaluation completed on the program. All subgroups of students met or nearly met ASAP's 50% three-year graduation rate goal and the program has reduced gaps in graduation rates between Hispanic and white and Black and white students, especially for male students. Columbia University's Center for Benefit Cost Studies in Education [comprehensive cost study of ASAP](#) found the program is both highly cost effective and cost beneficial as the average cost per ASAP graduate is lower than for comparison group graduates. ASAP also realizes large financial returns for both the taxpayer and the student in the form of increased tax revenues, social service savings, and increased lifetime earnings.

In 2015, CUNY implemented ACE ([Accelerate, Complete, Engage](#)), which applies the ASAP model for bachelor's degree seeking students and is showing similar [positive results](#) to ASAP. Today, a CUNY central academic affairs unit supports a consortium of 9 CUNY ASAP and 6 CUNY ACE programs. In addition, although causation has not been studied explicitly, visible upward trends in systemic associate degree attainment rates can be seen in aggregated CUNY data as the ASAP model has scaled to serve over 40% of CUNY's full time associate degree seeking students in the last decade.

As the CUNY system's success mounted, so did the demand to partner with the CUNY ASAP|ACE national replication team to support adaptation and implementation of the model in other contexts. To-date, the team has supported [ASAP|ACE replication](#) at 14 institutions across 7 states to form the ever-growing ASAP|ACE National Replication Collaborative at CUNY. In each replication program, experimental and quasi-experimental analyses affirm the replicated model's efficacy on increasing students' retention and completion. These results have even held during the pandemic with [promising interim findings](#) from the Viking ROADS ASAP replication at Westchester Community College and more recent long-term results published from [MDRC's long-term study](#) on the ASAP replication programs in Ohio.

Learning from these successful replication projects and recommendations from a recent strategic planning consultancy with Ithaca S&R initiated a new state systems scaling strategy to maximize the impact of replicating the ASAP|ACE model on national college completion rates. As this idea was further conceptualized, the opportunity for this dynamic partnership between the ASAP|ACE National Replication Collaborative at CUNY and the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) Association emerged.

Planned Learning Community Activities

A request for proposals will be issued to SHEEO agencies in June for five states to be selected and awarded planning grants. The chosen states will move through a year-long engagement including intensive technical assistance from SHEEO and the ASAP|ACE National Replication Collaborative at CUNY. Learning community events will take place between August 2023-June 2024. These activities will be primarily virtual, however, participating state teams will be reimbursed to attend a live 2-day convening in New York City this fall (tentative dates 11/2-11/3/23) to formally kick off the learning community together. At this event and thereafter, technical assistance activities and strategic planning consultation will center on the following topics:

- Coalition Building and Making the ROI (return-on-investment) Case
- Aligning ASAP Replication to State Higher Education Priorities
- Planning for Equity-Based, Systems-Scaled Replication Projects
- Sustainable Budgeting and Productive Funding Models

Planning Grants

Five (5) states will be selected for \$50,000 planning grants to facilitate their participation in the inaugural SHEEO|ASAP College Completion Coalition Learning Community. Planning grant funds will be distributed in Fall 2023. States may use these funds to support participation in the learning community and associated state-level work to advance a systems-scaled replication strategy following this initial project period. The only noted restriction for sub-grants is that the use of funds for direct government lobbying is prohibited.

Separate grant funds are available to reimburse state teams for travel and attendance at the NYC event in Fall 2023 and should not be allocated in state planning grant budgets.

State Deliverables

Selected state teams will be expected to participate in full group learning community activities (mostly virtual; in-person in Nov 2023), customized consultative sessions, and outside activities associated with coalition building and strategic planning for systems-scaled replication projects. By June 30, 2024 each state team will submit a final report to log project activities and forecast next steps in initiating systems-scaled ASAP replication projects. At the conclusion of the funded project period, SHEEO and the ASAP | ACE National Replication Collaborative at CUNY will integrate information from project activities and submitted reports to publish a brief detailing project outcomes and offering lessons learned on planning for systems-scaled ASAP replication focused on catalyzing other state system leaders to join the movement.

Project Timeline

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Date</i>
Informational Webinar/RFP Opens	June 14, 2023, 2pm ET
Deadline for RFP Submissions	July 21, 2023 by 5pm ET
Anticipated Notice of Award	On or before July 28, 2023
State Coalition Meetings (virtual)	Sept-Oct 2023
Learning Community Convening (in NYC)	Nov 2-3, 2023 (tentative)
Technical Assistance Sessions & Consultation (virtual)	Dec 2023-April 2024
Final State Reports Due	June 30, 2024
SHEEO ASAP Lessons Learned Brief Published	Fall 2024

Request for Proposals (RFP)

The RFP opens June 14, 2023. The RFP document and additional relevant information can be accessed on the [SHEEO website](#). Applicants must submit a single PDF of their complete proposal to Katie Giardello (katherine.giardello@cuny.edu) no later than 5pm ET on Friday, July 21, 2023. Selected states will be notified of their award on or before Friday, July 28, 2023.

Eligibility

Proposals will be accepted from state planning teams made up of collaborative organizations with responsibility for oversight and/or coordination of public community colleges. At least one organizational partner on the team must be a named [SHEEO member](#), although this entity is not required to formally submit the application nor take central lead on the project. Roles and responsibilities of coalition members must be addressed within RFP responses.

Selection Process

RFP responses will be reviewed and scored by SHEEO and ASAP|ACE national replication collaborative staff. Scoring is based on responses to the four major learning community topics this project will cover as described above: Coalition Building and Making the ROI (return-on-investment) Case; Aligning ASAP Replication to State Higher Education Priorities; Planning for Equity-Based, Systems-Scaled Replication Projects; Sustainable Budgeting and Productive Funding Models. A scoring rubric will be available on the [SHEEO website](#) upon release of the RFP.

Questions

Please refer RFP questions to the contacts below no later than July 14, 2023.

Contacts

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