Final Report for Los Rios Community College District's Strengthening Community College Training Grant Project

Crosswalking Business Pathways to Public Sector Careers

Lisa Le Fevre, Mary Rauner, and Greg Hill Jr.

WestEd

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Executive Summary

In January 2021, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) awarded its first round of Strengthening Community College (SCC) Training Grants to individual institutions or consortia of community colleges, for a total of $40 million (DOL, 2021). The funding aims to support and build community colleges' capacity to meet employers' and students' workforce training needs aligned to local industry demand and pathways leading to employment. The Crosswalking Business Pathways to Public Sector Careers project was part of the first cohort of SCC-funded projects, heretofore, referred to as the Strengthening Community College (SCC) project. A consortium effort within California's Sacramento region, the SCC project was led by American River College and partnering institutions within Los Rios Community College District (Los Rios District). The project engaged partners in building institutional capacity and systems change for Business Information Professional (BIP) programming[1] and work-based training. It effectively leveraged strategies that integrate employer engagement, cross-institutional alignment, and opportunities for students (particularly those with barriers to employment) to access and advance within public sector careers.

WestEd served as the project's third-party evaluator by documenting implementation, progress, successes, challenges, and lessons learned. The evaluation used a descriptive study design and phased evaluation structure that included a mix of developmental, formative, and outcome evaluation approaches. Evaluation goals included supporting and documenting successes, challenges, lessons learned, and recommendations within the region's education and workforce programming and toward creating systems change.

The evaluation questions were aligned with the core elements and outcome areas, as shown in the following tables and as described in more detail throughout the report.

1 In the grant proposal to DOL, the consortium referred to a focus on "Business Information Worker (BIW)" programming. While the project team was revising the programming, they changed the name to "Business Information Professional (BIP)." This change was formally reported to and approved by DOL.

Core Element 2: Sector Strategies and Employer Engagement

Outcome Area	Evaluation Question
2a: Increase in the level and depth of employer engagement and investment in educational and training programs	EQ1: To what extent has the project increased levels and types of employer engagement and support for pathways, student employment, retention, and advancement of career pathway participants?
2b: Percent of employers that change policies to better support work-based learning opportunities and employment or both, retention, and advancement of career pathway participants	EQ1: To what extent has the project increased levels and types of employer engagement and support for pathways, student employment, retention, and advancement of career pathway participants?

Core Element 3: Enhanced Career Pathways Programs and Accelerated Learning Strategies

Outcome Area	Evaluation Question
3a: Design or implementation of new, accelerated instructional techniques or technologies, including the use of advanced online and technology-enabled learning	EQ2: How was the SCC project able to enhance career pathways programming and accelerated learning strategies for adult learners?
3b: Measure of restructuring or alignment of educational and training programs based on local or regional labor market data	EQ3: To what extent did the project improve alignment and integration with regional workforce partners and streamline or expand services for career pathway participants?

Core Element 4: Strategic Alignment with Workforce Development System

Outcome Area	Evaluation Question
4a: Increase in program and policy alignment across systems and/or decrease in duplicative services or service gaps	EQ3: To what extent did the project improve alignment and integration with regional workforce partners and streamline or expand services for career pathway participants?

Outcome Area	Evaluation Question
4b: Development of new and/or expanded partnerships among key system actors that result in streamlined or expanded services for participants	EQ3: To what extent did the project improve alignment and integration with regional workforce partners and streamline or expand services for career pathway participants?

Core Element 5: Innovative Systems Change

Outcome Area	Evaluation Question
5a: Measure of removing significant systemic barriers for career pathway participants	EQ4: To what extent did the project improve access to robust work-based learning opportunities to facilitate the success of participants in career pathways?
5b: Increase in linkages developed throughout a career pathway, to encompass bridge programs, career and technical training programs, and work-based learning	EQ4: To what extent did the project improve access to robust work-based learning opportunities to facilitate the success of participants in career pathways?

The evaluation activities included

- tracking and observing recurring partner planning and implementation meetings (e.g., meetings with participating college partners; industry partner meetings as part of a regional advisory board);
- supporting refinements to the project's logic model;
- conducting documentation review of quarterly narrative reports and related project materials (e.g., presentation decks and partner-produced survey findings);
- assessing project milestones and timelines against leading indicators and benchmarks; and
- conducting interviews and focus groups to capture project team members' experiences with core project planning, curriculum development, and employer engagement.

This final report offers key outcomes for the project's activities from its inception to the end of the contract (January 2021–December 2024). The evaluation findings indicate that the project team cultivated cross-campus collaboration, aligned education and workforce aims to develop new BIP curriculum, and cultivated employer engagement. The project partners

- engaged with public sector employers to understand the skills needed in the workforce, incorporate employer insight and feedback into the new BIP curriculum, and develop a list of internships for BIP students;
- cultivated cross-institutional collaboration and created a foundation for a "culture of collaboration" among partnering community colleges in the district;
- leveraged partnerships, cross-agency alignment, and strengths to create the new BIP curriculum for two stackable certificates (BIP I and BIP II) and one A.S. degree (Business Information Technology) incorporating the Accelerated College Education model; and
- designed proactive advising programs for BIP students, including opt-out scheduling and sequential enrollment, to maximize course availability.

The report also outlines successes, challenges, lessons learned, and recommendations for future or similar project efforts. These reflections include adapting and being persistent when faced with barriers; collaborating successfully to develop and align the BIP curriculum across colleges; developing strong management and communication systems, particularly during the final grant year; weathering leadership changes; and recognizing that collaboration can continue with other projects in the future.

Introduction and Background

> *"I think being able to take the curriculum that has existed for many years and…system design–wise, look at what we have and what we need to have,…honors the students and their pathways to the profession in the truest form."*
>
> *Curriculum Group Member*

Introduction

Los Rios Community College District (Los Rios District)'s *Crosswalking Business Pathways to Public Sector Careers* project was a consortium effort in California's Sacramento region, designed to engage partners in building institutional capacity and systems change for Business Information Professional (BIP) programming and work-based training. The project began in 2021 with the goals of effectively leveraging strategies that integrate employer engagement; eliciting cross-institutional alignment; and creating opportunities for students' pathways into public sector jobs and careers. Additional project goals were to improve public sector outreach and hiring practices in the region and to significantly increase the number of individuals with barriers to employment who access and advance into public sector employment. The project was part of the first cohort of the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)'s Strengthening Community Colleges (SCC) Training Grants program.

DOL's SCC Grant and Evaluation Requirement

DOL's SCC grants are awarded to colleges or consortia of higher education partners. These grants support projects aimed at building capacity for addressing skill-building and workforce development needs for students' academic and career success. As part of the grant activities, the DOL requires that a third-party evaluator document and evaluate project implementation and how teams build capacity and systems change at multiple levels (i.e., at or across higher education institutions, districtwide, and/or statewide) (DOL, 2020). Evaluation goals include

capturing progress toward SCC grant aims and project outcomes and identifying effective strategies that address workforce and educational needs and opportunities from students to employers. WestEd served as Los Rios District's SCC grant evaluator to document and share learning from the project. This report provides evaluation findings on project implementation from January 2021 to December 2024.

Introduction to WestEd, Project Evaluator

WestEd is a preeminent education research, development, and service organization. The organization has been a leader in moving research into practice by conducting research and development programs, projects, and evaluations; providing training and technical assistance; and working with workforce and education interest holders at the national, state, and local levels to carry out large-scale and innovative change and improvement.

Evaluation Purpose, Approach, and Design

The evaluation's overarching purpose was to document and help inform Los Rios District's and the consortium's efforts to build the new curriculum, strengthen systems to effectively serve students, and expand partnerships to create robust pathways for underserved populations into public service administration jobs. WestEd tracked how the project team developed capacity and implemented systems change toward enhancing, aligning, and increasing participation in public sector business employment and career pathways, specifically through its BIP pathway. Systems change efforts centered on fostering collaboration between education and workforce partners, aligning curriculum to meet the needs of education partners and public sector employers, and expanding students' access and pathways through work-based learning opportunities and targeted strategies.

The evaluation used a descriptive study design and phased evaluation structure that included a mix of developmental, formative, and outcome evaluation approaches. Evaluation goals included following and documenting project development, implementation, and pivots, as well as providing iterative feedback and support. The evaluation also identified project challenges, successes, outcomes, lessons learned, and recommendations.

The three evaluation approaches and the related purposes and project phases applications are outlined in Table 1. The developmental and formative approaches spanned the duration of the project; the outcome assessment was added during the final project phases.

Table 1. Evaluation Approaches and Purposes

Evaluation Approach	Purpose/Objective	Project Phases/Application
Developmental	Follow/Document/Support: • Project dynamics • Complexities inherent in implementation, collaboration, pathway development • Innovation and new practices	Ongoing Life Cycle of Project: • Inquiry and planning • Identifying issues, community needs, targeted outcomes • Continuous feedback, iterations, improvements
Formative (process)	Examine/Document/Track: • Project implementation and elements of process • Key project influences/drivers • Project challenges and obstacles • Project successes inform improvements	Ongoing Life Cycle of Project: • Plans executed • Activities launched • Enhancements contemplated • Project refinements executed
Outcome	Analyze/Evaluate/Assess: • Intended project targets • Project results/outcomes • Achievements/innovations • Measure processes, practices, change (e.g., effectiveness, what worked, what didn't work)	Later/End Project Cycle: • Activities completed/results available • Outcomes measured (short-term, mid-term, etc.) • Analysis/findings reported • Recommendations offered

Background

The *Crosswalking Business Pathways to Public Sector Careers* project engaged partners in systems change activities designed to build cross-institutional capacity for local BIP academic and workforce training needs and to increase access to public sector careers for adult learners with barriers to employment within the Sacramento region. The project responded to a gap within the area's public sector by proposing to train an anticipated 2,300 skilled workers annually and to increase the number of business services professionals in the region (DOL, 2021).

Participating Institutions

Los Rios District serves students from the greater Sacramento area to Lake Tahoe, California. At the beginning of the project, the four community colleges in the district—American River College (ARC), Cosumnes River College (CRC), Folsom Lake College (FLC), and Sacramento City College—agreed to collaborate. Sacramento City College decided not to participate in the project, but the other three colleges remained active partners throughout the contract (see Appendix D for demographic information on participating colleges). Faculty from each college collaborated to design the curriculum and implement the project at their respective campuses.

Valley Vision, a regional leadership organization, was responsible for employer engagement; provided workforce opportunities; and informed the curriculum development. A primary role that it played was to establish and convene a regional advisory board (RAB) whose members offered information, guidance, and collaboration on project activities, particularly around curriculum development. The key organizations participating in the RAB were the Institute for Local Government (ILG), the Capital Adult Education Regional Consortium (CAERC), and the Sacramento Employment and Training Agency (SETA). SETA is the project's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) partner[2].

Additional organizational partners who supported the project's efforts to provide students with skills that foster strong relationships and thriving work environments through training and certifications included LinkedIn Premier, the International Association of Administrative Professionals (IAAP), the American Management Association (AMA) OnDemand, Skillsoft Career Training (Skillsoft), the Association of Administrative Professionals and Executive Assistants Professional Administrative Certification of Excellence (ASAP/PACE), Certiport, and Heroes VR.

Program Purpose and Program Goals

Los Rios District's SCC grant was designed to improve public sector career outcomes and access to jobs for individuals with barriers to employment. This grant was developed in response to the documented gap in the region's workforce supply and demand. An enhanced BIP career pathway toward high-wage, high-growth employment in the public sector was developed to provide training and skills toward the need for 2,300 skilled workers annually in Sacramento (DOL, 2021). The outcome goals of the program were to

- establish a regional advisory board of public sector employers to guide the work;
- develop curriculum that are reflective of the skill sets required by public sector employees and that incorporate principles of Adaptability, Connection, and Equity from the Accelerated College Education (ACE) model;

[2] The federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to success in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled worked they need to compete in the global economy.

- engage 120 students in the BIP pathway programs; and
- provide students with increased opportunities for public sector workplace opportunities through student-centered support processes, partnerships with local employment agencies, and work-based learning opportunities.

Broad Program Activities

During the project, the partners engaged with public sector employers to understand workforce needs. They successfully collaborated across three of the four Los Rios District campuses to create the new BIP curriculum that included input and feedback from employers. Two certificates (BIP I and BIP II) and one A.S. degree (Business Information Technology) that incorporate principles from the ACE model were included in the fall 2024 course catalogs. A proactive advising program for BIP students, which allows students to opt out for a term or terms if needed and easily return to complete their credentials, was also created.

Later in the grant, the project secured new partnerships with vendors who provide subscription services that complement the BIP curriculum through networking, training, and certifications. The vendor partners included LinkedIn Premier, IAAP, AMA OnDemand, Skillsoft, ASAP/PACE, Certiport, and Heroes VR.

Report Organization and Limitations

This report provides a description and evaluation of Los Rios District's SCC project, *Crosswalking Business Pathways to Public Sector Careers*, which began in January 2021 and ended in December 2024.

The following report sections include

- a methods and analysis section that outlines the evaluation questions, activities, data collection, and analytical strategies and procedures;
- a program overview section that includes details about the study sites, partners, management and staffing, timeline, and challenges faced during project implementation;
- a summary of the project activities and outputs, organized by the project's core elements, outcome areas, and evaluation questions;
- the evaluation findings, also organized primarily by core elements;
- a section for lessons learned and recommendations, which also highlights the project's successes and challenges; and
- a conclusion and limitations section, which also describes next steps and plans for sustainability.

Appendices A–F include the project's logic model, a sample evaluation interview guide, a student survey instrument, demographic data from the first year of the contract (2021/22) from participating colleges, the project timeline, and project overview slides.

The information and evaluation findings described in this report are limited to the *Crosswalking Business Pathways to Public Sector Careers* project and are not intended to be generalizable. Instead, they are intended to inform an understanding of the successes, challenges, and lessons learned from the project's efforts and implementation.

Methods and Analysis

The *Crosswalking Business Pathways to Public Sector Careers* project evaluation was designed to understand the extent to which the Los Rios District consortium effort effectively leveraged strategies to integrate employer engagement, elicit cross-institutional alignment, and create opportunities for students' pathway into public sector jobs and careers. This section describes the evaluation questions, activities, sampling strategy, and number of participants, data collection and data sources, and analysis strategies and procedures for this evaluation.

Evaluation Questions

Four overarching evaluation questions guided the evaluation of the project:

1. To what extent has the project increased levels and types of employer engagement and support for pathways, student employment, retention, and advancement of career pathway participants?
2. How was the SCC project able to enhance career pathway programming and accelerated learning strategies for adult learners?
3. To what extent did the project improve alignment and integration with regional workforce partners and streamline or expand services for career pathway participants?
4. To what extent did the project improve access to robust work-based learning opportunities to facilitate the success of participants in career pathways?

These evaluation questions align with the core elements, outcome areas, and grantee customized outcomes, as described in more detail in the *Summary of Activities and Outputs* section of this report.

Evaluation Activities Completed

Evaluation activities were planned in collaboration with project leadership and were documented in a formal evaluation plan in March 2022. The activities aligned with the evaluation approaches chosen (developmental, formative, and outcome) and the project implementation phases. These activities included reviewing documentation, conducting

interviews and focus groups, mapping the consortium network structure and activities, observing meetings, and coding and thematically analyzing all quantitative and qualitative data.

One planned evaluation activity was to gather quantitative (enrollment, retention, persistence, and completion) and qualitative (program perspectives and experiences) data from career pathway participants, based on a cohort model. However, at the time of the evaluation, there were no participants because the revised BIP pathway program had not enrolled a new cohort of students due to delays in securing certificate and curriculum approvals at the district level.

To ensure that this evaluation report reflected student perspectives, the evaluation team developed a student survey (Appendix C) that the colleges could administer to elicit information from students currently enrolled in the Business Technology (BUSTEC) program, some of whom were taking BIP courses. Without a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that allowed WestEd to gather and analyze student-level data, WestEd recommended that the campuses administer the survey, analyze the data, and write a memo summarizing the findings, which could be included in the report. Folsom Lake College administered the survey, but did not analyze the data in time for it to be included in this report. Data gathered using this survey will enable each college to gather and analyze data over time and use the findings to support program evaluation and improvement.

Table 2 provides a description of the evaluation activities by project phase.

Table 2. Evaluation Activities: Objectives, Types, and Descriptions

Objective/Project Phase	Methods/Activity Type	Description
Establishing project understanding and collaboratively refining key outcomes/measures	Documentation review (qualitative)	The evaluation team collected, reviewed, coded, and thematically analyzed documents related to project development, implementation, and progress, including: • Work plans/logic model • Notes from meetings with project leadership and project team check-ins • Project materials, including presentation notes, slide decks, developed curriculum, and information on employer engagement needs • Quarterly narrative reports Documentation review enabled the evaluation team to establish a baseline and contextual understanding of the project and its goals. Ongoing reviews included tracking project evolution, understanding improvements/refinements, and investigating project deliverables (e.g., resources, curriculum, and tools created).
	Interviews and focus groups (qualitative)	To capture multiple project partner voices (institutional partners, employers/industry), the evaluation team developed interview/focus group protocols and instruments; conducted virtual interviews and focus; and captured, coded, and thematically analyzed interview notes, transcripts, and recordings.

Objective/Project Phase	Methods/Activity Type	Description
Process tracking and observing trajectories	Network and activity mapping (quantitative and qualitative)	The evaluation team tracked how project partnerships developed, strengthened, and expanded during the project, through documents review and partner input on experiences.
	Observations (qualitative)	The evaluation team tracked processes, partnerships, and collaboration through observing key meetings, including: • Biannual RAB meetings focused on employer/partner engagement • Faculty collaboration/training/curriculum development efforts • Interest group meetings and discussions (e.g., core project group, workforce development partners, industry)
Measuring and assessing outcomes	Overall process/outcomes review/analysis/assess-ment (quantitative and qualitative)	The evaluation team collaborated with project leadership to develop and refine a project logic model and to develop a data collection and measurement framework for project outcomes corresponding to SCC core elements. The core elements are: • Sector Strategies and Employer Engagement • Enhanced Career Pathways Programs and Accelerated Learning Strategies • Strategic Alignment with Workforce Development System • Innovative Systems Change
	Participant characteristics and outcomes (quantitative and qualitative)	In collaboration with project leadership, the evaluation team developed a student survey that Folsom Lake College administered to students in their program.

Sampling Strategy and Number of Career Pathway Participants

Sampling plans for evaluation activities initially focused on two key groups: career pathway participants and project leaders and partners. The evaluation team was unable to directly engage with career pathway participants due to delays in obtaining curriculum approval and recruiting new participants. The evaluation team coordinated with project leadership to identify

and recruit project leaders and partners to engage in the evaluation process. Over the course of the project, the team conducted interviews (see Appendix B for the interview protocol used in fall 2024) and/or focus groups, involving 17 individuals who participated in the project in various roles (project leaders, faculty who designed the curriculum, and representatives from partner agencies). When possible, the evaluation team leveraged participation in existing meetings for data collection activities.

The information gleaned from interviews and focus groups provided the evaluation team with an understanding of the project processes, insights into experiences, and perceptions of the effectiveness of project programming. Participation in evaluation activities was voluntary, and information about the evaluation, the evaluation intent, and participant benefits/rights (e.g., opt-in and opt-out measures) was shared clearly with all participants.

Data Collection and Data Sources

Data collection included a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods and instruments. The evaluation team created coding schemes, matrices, and analytical/thematic charts for documentation review and to organize findings. The team also developed and administered focus groups and interview protocols and instruments, processed tracking and observations, and reviewed and analyzed meeting notes to chart project implementation, events, and trajectories. In addition, the team reviewed aggregated data from employer surveys and certification tests and passing rates over time.

Analysis Strategies and Procedures

Using data gathered from documentation reviews, interviews, focus groups, network and activity mapping, and meeting observations, the evaluation team systematically identified patterns and themes around partnership development, employer engagement, curriculum development, establishment of student-centered processes, and promotion of public sector careers. The team then further analyzed and summarized these themes to highlight key findings, challenges, successes, lessons learned, and recommendations.

Program Overview

The *Crosswalking Business Pathways to Public Sector Careers* project was a consortium effort involving education and training organizations, intermediaries, and public sector employers that collaborated to bridge the documented gap in public sector training and increase access to public sector careers for adult learners facing barriers to employment. Los Rios District was the primary grantee for the project. American River College, one of the district's colleges, was the consortium lead.

This section provides a detailed description of each project partner and their roles. It also describes the project timeline, staffing, management, and challenges that led to project adjustments.

Study Sites/Institutions and Roles

At the beginning of the project, all four colleges in the district—American River College (ARC), Cosumnes River College (CRC), Folsom Lake College (FLC), and Sacramento City College—expressed interest in participating in the consortium efforts. Sacramento City College ultimately did not participate in the project, but representatives from the other three colleges were active partners throughout the course of the project. The following sections provide background information on each of the colleges that participated in the project, and additional demographic data about these colleges are provided in Appendix D.

American River College

Located in North Sacramento, ARC is the largest community college in the district, featuring extensive facilities and resources. In addition to robust opportunities in career technical education, athletics, and the arts, it offers strong science, technology, engineering, and math programs. The college is home to a strong Honors Program and maintains valuable partnerships with local industries. ARC has also established clear learning outcomes for its students, emphasizing the development of personal and professional skills essential for career readiness and academic success.[3]

[3] ARC learning outcomes are available at https://arc.losrios.edu/why-arc/facts-and-statistics/institutional-learning-outcomes.

Cosumnes River College

CRC is a suburban community college located in South Sacramento, offering a strong focus on agriculture, veterinary technology, culinary arts, and environmental studies. The college emphasizes community connections and career-focused education, with programs tailored to local industries and strong support for Native American students. CRC is one of the country's most diverse two-year public colleges and serves a high number of first-generation college-goers. [4]

Folsom Lake College

Folsom Lake College (FLC) is the newest addition to the Los Rios Community College District, located in Folsom, California. It serves approximately 8,000 students and offers a modern, scenic campus with a focus on personalized learning and small class sizes. FLC is known for its strong general education programs, transfer pathways to CSU and UC systems, and specialized offerings in business, technology, and the arts. The college is home to the Harris Center for the Arts, a regional performing arts venue, which enhances its vibrant cultural scene. With satellite campuses in El Dorado County and Rancho Cordova, FLC caters to a diverse student population across a growing region. Its emphasis on innovation, community engagement, and individualized support makes it an excellent choice for students seeking a close-knit academic environment.[5]

ARC was responsible for project oversight. Partnering colleges and the initial and current roles of college staff who participated in the project are described in Table 3.

Table 3. Partnering Colleges and Project Roles

College	Initial Role	Current Role
American River College	Project Administrator (Oversight)	*same*
	Project Director *(ended March 2024)*	*none*
	Faculty Lead; Curriculum Developer	Project Director *(began March 2024)*

[4] See CRC's "At a Glance" document at https://crc.losrios.edu/crc/shared/doc/facts-statistics/at-a-glance.pdf.

[5] For more information about FLC, see https://flc.losrios.edu/why-flc.

College	Initial Role	Current Role
	Faculty Curriculum Developer	*Retired*
	Faculty Curriculum Developer	*same*
	Project Administrative Assistant (Operational Support)	*same*
	Workforce/Internship Coordination	*same*
Cosumnes River College	Faculty Lead; Curriculum Developer	*same*
Folsom Lake College	Faculty Lead; Curriculum Developer	Faculty Lead; Curriculum Developer; District-level Curriculum Approval Coordinator

Intermediary, Employer, and Industry Partners and Roles

The intermediary, employer, and industry partners participating in the project guided employer engagement and informed curriculum development for the BIP pathway. These partners also strategized around regional needs for, and ways to provide work/learning opportunities for, BIP students.

Valley Vision

Valley Vision, a civic leadership organization[6] with strong ties to industry, education, and government sectors in the Sacramento region, was a key employer engagement partner and industry/public sector intermediary for the project. Valley Vision's primary role was to connect the project's educational partners to regional employers. Valley Vision helped the colleges better understand employer needs by convening and facilitating quarterly meetings of a regional advisory board (RAB); providing targeted research and reporting; and helping frame an employer outreach strategy. It was also the primary mechanism through which the Curriculum Group (described below) solicited input from regional employers on curriculum and related issues. In fall 2024, Valley Vision conducted a survey of industry leaders to understand skills acquisition and retention. Sixteen surveys were completed, and the findings will be included in a separate report by Valley Vision. The Leadership Group (defined below) provided faculty with

[6] See Valley Vision's website at https://www.valleyvision.org/.

a list of regional employers' work-based learning or placement opportunities for students, and ideated on possible system changes that can reduce barriers to access and to support students' successful transition into careers.

Regional Advisory Board Members

The RAB members offered information and guidance to the project. They also collaborated on project activities for employer engagement and industry outlook. RAB board members included representatives from the Institute for Local Government (ILG), the Capital Adult Education Regional Consortium (CAERC), and the Sacramento Employment and Training Agency (SETA).

Institute for Local Government[7]

The ILG, established in 1955, provides information to government officials in the Sacramento area through its research capacity, publications, and training programs on topics that are relevant to public policy issues. ILG staff participated in RAB meetings, provided advice to the project partners, and presented at the 2023 Public Sector Workforce Forum for Greater Sacramento. In 2021, the ILG distributed a survey to government employers that included questions about the technical and soft skills that public sector job applicants needed and the internship, apprenticeship, and work opportunities that were available through their organizations. The findings from this survey helped to inform the project's curriculum design, work experience considerations, and outreach and engagement strategies.

Capital Adult Education Regional Consortium[8]

CAERC is an adult education consortium that consists of representatives from school districts, county offices of education, community colleges, and other interested adult education groups in the Sacramento region. Its role as part of the RAB was to help create on-ramps for adult education students into the BIP pathway. CAERC, in partnership with refugee resettlement agencies and early workforce preparation nonprofits, also designed a specific articulation to align with the Los Rios Refugee Career Pathway program.

Sacramento Employment and Training Agency[9]

SETA is a public agency that funds and supports programs in education, training, and childcare to support Sacramento County residents to reach their personal and professional potential. It helps to establish and track student referrals and services for Los Rios District students. SETA participated in the RAB meetings and presented at the 2023 Public Sector Workforce Forum for

[7] https://www.ca-ilg.org/history

[8] https://caerc.org/

[9] https://www.seta.net/

Greater Sacramento. It also collaborated with project partners on establishing criteria for student referral, placement, and reporting processes.

Other RAB Members

Other organizations that participated in some of the RAB meetings included the Sacramento County Health Education Council, Employment Development Department, and Employment Development Council; the California Department of Rehabilitation; and the Sacramento Municipal Utilities District.

Vendor Subscription Partners

Employers articulated that their most significant unmet need was for students to have soft skills and industry-recognized certifications and badging that complement the technical skills that they bring to the workplace. During the later stages of grant efforts, project leadership worked to establish subscriptions with multiple vendor partners to meet this need. These vendor subscription partners are described in the following sections.

LinkedIn Premier

LinkedIn Premier is a full-service platform used for talent management tracking, analytics, recruitment, and strategic planning. This will be the first group of community colleges to engage in a partnership with LinkedIn that will provide students with a suite of services that includes LinkedIn Learning. It will also provide students with short- and long-range student tracking, job placement, networking, and system-level career and technical education reporting requirements. The contract for this partnership was executed in November and students will have access to this support beginning in January 2025.

International Association of Administrative Professionals

The International Association of Administrative Professionals (IAAP) is a training platform for administrative professionals. This partnership will provide students with certification, training, and mentorship that are oriented to office administration and business technology. The instruction, badging, and mentorship content will be provided on an on-demand basis, will provide badging for LinkedIn profiles, and will remain available to students after they complete the program. The contract for this partnership is currently in progress.

American Management Association OnDemand

The partnership with the American Management Association (AMA) OnDemand provides instructional resources, workshops, and mentorship for students and faculty in the areas of business and leadership. Badging is available for student certification and will greatly enhance

employability. This partnership will deepen student engagement and learning, and will provide instructors with all available instructional resources at no cost to students or faculty. These resources will remain available to students after program completion and will provide badging for LinkedIn profiles. The contract for this partnership has been executed and students will have access to this support in January 2025.

Skillsoft Career Training

The contract with Skillsoft Career Training (Skillsoft) will provide BIP students with a comprehensive selection of skills development tools in the areas of leadership mindsets, diversity, equity, and inclusion. Current trends and topics, such as artificial intelligence and soft skills leadership development learning, are also included in these tools. Professional memberships and continuing education will be available for all cohorts. These resources will follow the students after program completion and will provide badging for LinkedIn profiles. The contract for this partnership has been executed and students will have access to this support in January 2025.

Follett

Follett provides access to course materials for students in higher education. The partnership with Follett will result in a no-expiration textbook/subscription acquisition voucher program for students pursuing the BIP I and BIP II certifications and the A.S. degree in Business Information Technology. The students will receive a $100 voucher per unit for up to $6,000 of supplies, materials, and subscriptions per student. The vouchers will be maintained by Follett as part of the contractual service agreement. The contract for this partnership is in progress.

Association of Administrative Professionals Training and Executive Assistants Professional Administrative Certification of Excellence

The partnership with the Association of Administrative Professionals and Executive Assistants Professional Administrative Certification of Excellence (ASAP/PACE) certification will provide instructional resources, workshops, and mentorship for faculty and students. The ASAP/PACE interactive e-learning platform focuses on four key skills: interpersonal communication, task and project management, computer and internet technology, and management skills. PACE certification will demonstrate the depth of students' knowledge, expertise, and commitment to potential employers. This partnership with ASAP/PACE also provides BIP students who complete two continuing education credits annually with a lifetime ASAP membership. The contract for this partnership has been executed and students will have access to this support in January 2025.

Certiport

Certiport is a testing management company (a Pearson VUE business) that provides effective learning and practice materials and industry-recognized exams. Through this partnership, exams for Microsoft products will be offered to BIP students and will result in certifications that provide evidence of their skills to potential employers. The contract for this partnership has been executed and students will have access to this support in January 2025.

Heroes VR

Heroes VR will contract on the project to maintain the Tailspin VR lab, in which students will engage in immersion experiences, such as learning how to communicate with empathy, using virtual reality technology. The contract for this partnership is in progress.

Figure 1 shows the key partners in the project.

Figure 1. Crosswalking Business Information Professional Pathway to Public Sector Careers Partner Network

Management and Staffing Structure

The project partners ultimately formed three entities to guide project efforts: project leadership, a Core Group, and a Curriculum Group. The following sections describe each group.

Project Leadership

Although American River College (ARC) served as the managing college for project efforts, the project partners emphasized horizontal leadership and collaboration. There were two project directors during the grant. The initial project director guided efforts from the contract's beginning (January 2021) until he left ARC in March 2024. After his departure, a core ARC faculty project member from since the work's inception became the project director. Project leadership also included a member of the ARC administration who provided project oversight.

Core Group

The Core Group consisted of project leadership, faculty members from each of the partnering colleges, and staff from Valley Vision as the intermediary organization heading employer engagement. The Core Group met weekly, from the beginning of the project, to discuss project tasks, to strategize on project activities, and to spur collaboration. Since March 2024, the project director also met separately with two Valley Vision staff members on a weekly basis to understand the status of the project and industry relationships.

The number of individuals in the group changed over time, with the departure of three regular members for different reasons (change in project directorship, retirement, and one college no longer participating in the project). At the end of the grant, the group consisted of the project director/faculty lead, a member providing administrative oversight, a faculty member, and a member providing operational support from ARC; a faculty lead from CRC; and a faculty lead from FLC.

Curriculum Group

The Curriculum Group met weekly throughout the duration of the project. The group included the faculty leads from each college and two additional faculty curriculum developers from ARC, one who retired before the end of the grant. The faculty lead for each college coordinated a curriculum committee at their college, which also met on a weekly basis and a district-level curriculum committee met monthly.

Timeline of Implementation

The project encountered various delays that impacted implementation and, ultimately, scope. In the early phases of the project, delays in executing contracts with employer engagement partners and in securing commitments from college and program administrators extended the timeline for establishing the RAB and for development and refinement of the new BIP curriculum. Development was further hampered by Sacramento City College's unexpected decision to withdraw from the grant, as well as by administrative hurdles that made obtaining

approvals that were needed at different stages of development and implementation unnecessarily time-consuming and cumbersome.

Across colleges, institutional barriers related to program "ownership" and sharing of curriculum, as well as systemic challenges in the different course approval processes at each college, also contributed to delays in implementation. Other factors contributing to timeline delays included systemic barriers such as the public sector being unwilling to pilot the hiring platform; shifts in interests or priorities, such as the district discontinuing the Los Rios College Online portal; and delays in hiring a dedicated counselor and a marketing firm to support student outreach.

When the project director left in early 2024, the partners realized that they did not have a basic understanding of the grant requirements and deadlines. For example, the project leadership and the Core and Curriculum Groups (heretofore referred to as the project team) missed the deadline to purchase equipment identified in the original scope, necessitating a scope adjustment to use the funds not allocated to the equipment.

Despite these challenges, the partners successfully aligned and completed the BIP curriculum that includes two stacked certificates and an A.S. degree. They also established operational processes to ensure that the curriculum reflected current industry needs and alignment across participating colleges. Programmatic delays and changes in leadership also created discoveries that led to promising pivots—for example, creating new strategies to bring in subscription partners such as LinkedIn—thus providing students with ongoing opportunities for job training and career opportunities.

Appendix E includes the project timeline and efforts in graphic and table form. Additional details on key project successes and challenges are provided in the *Lessons Learned and Recommendations* section of this report.

Rollout Process

The ability to adhere to the project schedule was, first and foremost, contingent upon the timely development of the curriculum. As described in the previous section, numerous barriers and delays, such as changes in partnership buy-in and systemic constraints on plans, shifted the anticipated project timelines and rollout. For example, early in the project, an ILG leader who had committed to collaborate on project efforts, left the ILG. The project needed to establish a working relationship and project commitment with a new ILG leader which took time. Also, as previously noted, the project leaders and the Core and Curriculum groups learned that the public sector was not flexible enough to pilot a planned hiring platform, so they revised their plans. Nevertheless, project partners persevered. The BIP curriculum was developed and successfully moved through the approval stages and the BIP classes were included in the fall 2024 course catalogs at all three colleges.

The project also revised plans when the project directorship changed in March 2024. Guided by input from industry partners, the project shifted from initially funding staff salaries to providing students with direct student support through vendor subscriptions. These subscriptions focused on providing student-centered services such as access to certifications, badging, and online platforms that provide content. The contracting process was time-consuming, which also resulted in implementation delays.

Overcoming Challenges

Although the project faced delays and challenges such as leadership changes and systemic constraints, project leadership and the Core Group overcame them by collaborating to develop solutions and by strengthening structures for communication and transparency. Table 4 summarizes the key challenges that the project faced during overall project implementation and describes actions that project leadership took to overcome these challenges.

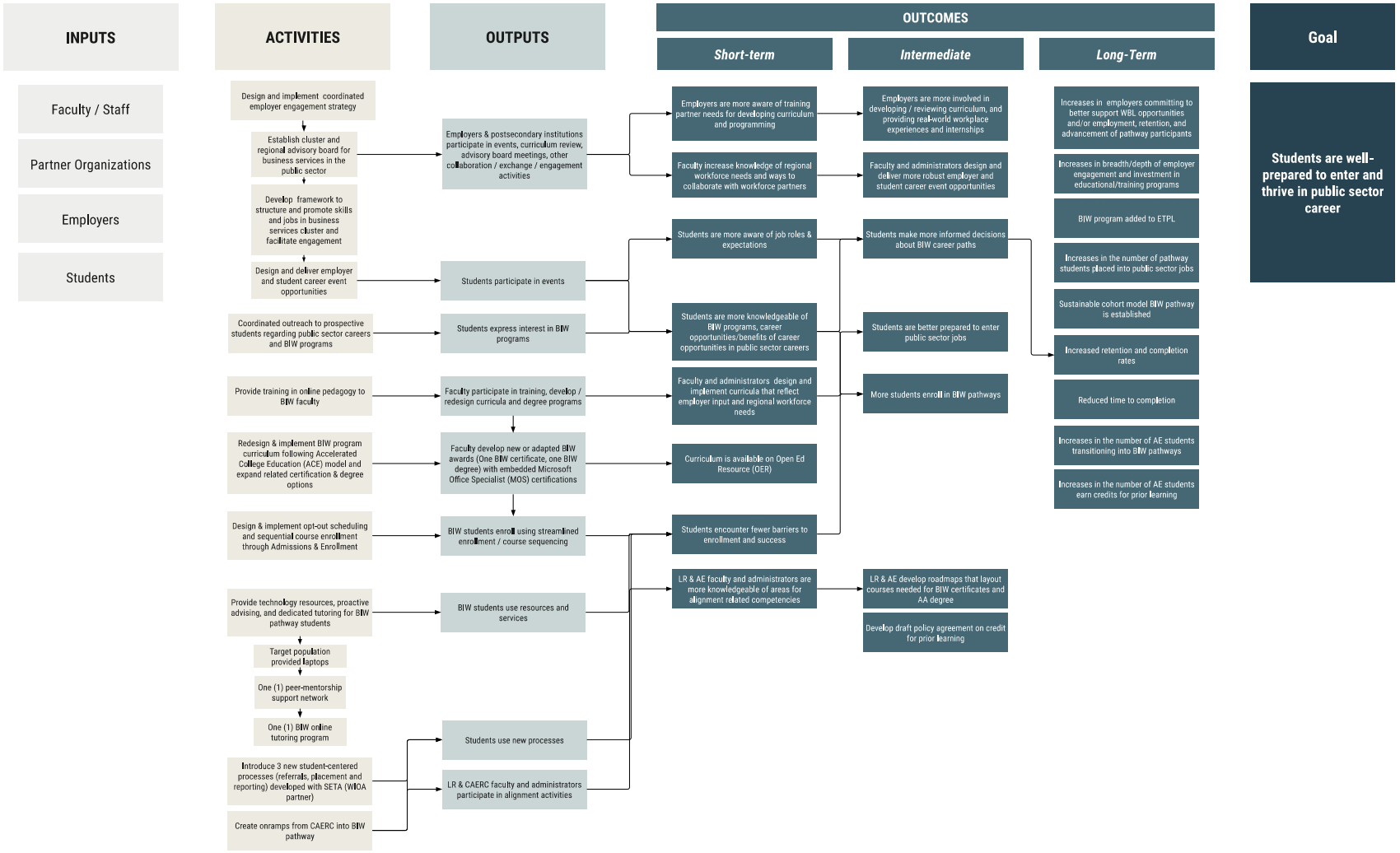
Table 4. Key Challenges: Overall Project Implementation

Challenges	Overcoming Challenges
Management transition: Under the leadership of the first project director (January 2021–March 2024), the consortium members had a different understanding of project expectations than what was required by the grant. There was inadequate transparency around the project context (such as deadlines and deliverables) and activities with other partners (e.g., no access to reporting). When the first project director left, the project team learned that some grant requirements had not been met and some deadlines (e.g., to purchase equipment) had passed. **Partner change:** One of the four colleges that initially expressed interest in participating in the project, Sacramento City College, ultimately decided not to engage. Thus, the curriculum will not be used at all Los Rios District colleges. **Bureaucratic delays:** Slow-moving bureaucratic steps and outdated systems resulted in both minor and major delays. For example, getting the required signatures for each step of the project was cumbersome and time-consuming. The new director spent significant time identifying staff with approval power, explaining the project to each person along the way. Also, instead of using more efficient signature processes, such as DocuSign, the approval systems required wet signatures, which further delayed progress. **Hiring delay:** Due to union rules, there was a delay in hiring a counselor to matriculate existing students into the program and provide them support.	Beginning in March 2024, the new project director collaborated with DOL to revise the scope of work. The new project director also established structures to ensure clear and consistent communication and to share documents and reports with the project team. During the remainder of the project cycle, until December 2024, the director and the team strengthened existing partnerships and established new partners—notably, several subscription partners—to ensure that the project goals were achieved. The team collaborated to overcome bureaucratic delays by leveraging existing relationships with college- and district-level colleagues and identifying key institutional partners to support their work. The project director also created a full-time position to manage and support the BIP pathway.

Explanation of Logic Model

The ultimate goal of the project, as reflected in its logic model was to ensure that students are well prepared to thrive in public sector careers (Figure 2). In the appendix, Figure A1 is the original logic model and Figure A2 is the revised logic model. The project was designed to facilitate students' entrance into BIP pathway programs and into jobs. To this end, the project sought to expand certificate and degree options for students and to provide training in different modalities (e.g., accelerated courses, and hy-flex, or hybrid flexible courses that allows students to choose how they participate in class). The project was ambitious in that it was designed to be the first degree program that is aligned across all colleges in the district. The project was also designed to provide a system of supports for BIP pathway students, including proactive advising, dedicated tutoring, a revamped enrollment and course selection process, technology resources, and work-based learning and placement opportunities.

Figure 2. Logic Model (Revised Version)

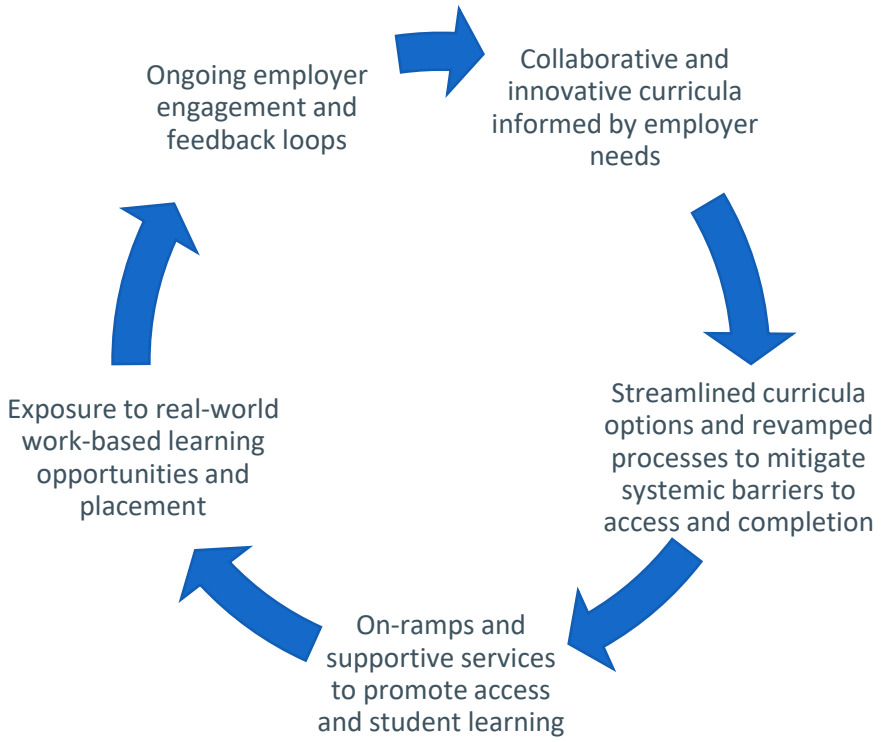


A fully accessible version of this figure is provided in Appendix A.

The project had three interrelated strands: employer engagement to inform curriculum development and build networks for information exchange and student learning; development of a streamlined, multimodal, student-centered BIP pathway program with multiple on-ramps and off-ramps leading to industry-valued certifications or degrees; and coordinated referral and supportive services to help students enter the program, stay in the program, ensure learning, and successfully transition into fulfilling careers.

The reflexive cycle of continuous improvement that underpinned the project is illustrated in Figure 3. Additional detail regarding inputs, outputs, and outcomes can be found in the project's logic model (Figure 2 and Appendix A).

Figure 3. Program Approach/Improvement Cycle



Although the project did not change significantly from what was outlined in the logic model, there were several challenges to implementation. For example, one college in the district declined to participate in the program, resulting in the new curriculum falling short of being a district-level collaboration. Instead, the curriculum is consistent across three of the four district colleges. Other challenges were due to delays in the curriculum and partner contract approval processes. These delays, many of which occurred early in the project timeline, had the effect of pushing some activities and outcomes, particularly those related to enrollment targets and student outcomes, into later in the contract period. These challenges are discussed in more detail throughout the report.

Summary of Activities and Outputs

This section charts and summarizes the project's progress and status related to the SCC core outcomes and the performance outcomes that were customized with DOL for Los Rios District's *Crosswalking Business Pathways to Public Sector Careers* project.

The details in this section reflect the outputs, measures, and activities for SCC Outcome Areas 2–5,[10] including descriptions of plans that have been completed, have pivoted, or are expected. For each SCC core element, a summary table shows the alignment between the core SCC outcome areas and the related grantee customized outcomes and evaluation questions. The summary table for each core element is followed by tables that list and describe the program activities/outputs/outcomes for each outcome area (for example, one table for Outcome Area 2a and one table for Outcome Area 2b).

[10] SCC Outcome 1 (under Core Element 1) is not included in this report because it centered on creating an "evidence-based design," which was achieved through designing an evaluation plan. The focus of Core Element 1 also shifted for subsequent cohorts of SCCT grantees and now emphasizes "advancing equity," which is a key focus embedded in Core Element 5 for this project.

Core Element 2: Sector Strategies and Employer Engagement

Table 5. Core Element 2: Outcome Areas, Grantee Customized Outcomes, and Evaluation Questions

Outcome Area	Grantee Customized Outcome	Evaluation Question
2a: Increase in the level and depth of employer engagement and investment in educational and training programs	2a: Establishment of a new, organized cluster and regional advisory board for business services in the public sector leads to more strategic engagement of employers and a mechanism for developing responsive curriculum	EQ1: To what extent has the project increased levels and types of employer engagement and support for pathways, student employment, retention, and advancement of career pathway participants?
2b: Percent of employers that change policies to better support work-based learning opportunities and/or employment, retention, and advancement of career pathway participants	2b: Growth in the number of public sector employers committed to trialing and integrating new methods and platforms into current public sector recruitment methods	EQ1: To what extent has the project increased levels and types of employer engagement and support for pathways, student employment, retention, and advancement of career pathway participants?

Outcome Area 2a. Increase in the level and depth of employer engagement and investment in educational and training programs

Grantee Customized Outcome: Establishment of a new, organized cluster and regional advisory board for business services in the public sector, leads to more strategic engagement of employers and a mechanism for developing responsive curriculum

Table 6 includes each program activity or output for Outcome Area 2a and narrative descriptions of the progress made through December 2024, the end of the grant cycle.

Table 6. Outcome Area 2a: Outputs, Measures, and Progress Descriptions

Outputs	Measures	Narrative Descriptions of Progress
Regional advisory board (RAB) meetings convened and attended throughout the grant cycle, leading to greater understanding of and alignment with workforce and training needs	At least 1 RAB meeting per year, attended by all consortium partners. Smaller working groups may be organized as needed for special projects	The project team successfully established a RAB that convened all consortium partners during project implementation. The RAB meetings took place biannually. The key partners in the RAB were the Institute for Local Government (ILG), the Capital Adult Education Regional Consortium (CAERC), and the Sacramento Employment and Training Agency (SETA).
Insights from RAB convenings, both from individual meetings and longitudinally across the grant period	2 high-quality reports per year, with summaries of RAB topics, outcomes, action items, and rosters of attendees	Valley Vision developed summaries of the RAB topics, outcomes, action items, and roster of attendees and provided information for inclusion in quarterly narrative reports.
Coordinated strategy on employer engagement with Valley Vision Regional Directors for sectors relevant to BIP pathway	Meet with Regional Directors to plan RAB meeting(s)	Regional directors met 4 times (May 1, 2021; May 2, 2022; May 1, 2023; and May 1, 2024) to plan RAB meetings and coordinate engagement strategies.
	Produce an Employer engagement strategy document	The project's employer engagement strategy was first coordinated with regional directors in fall 2021. Valley Vision shared the first draft of its strategic engagement report completed in March 2022. The report provided a summary of the employer engagement activities conducted to date through various meetings and activities. Plans for a coordinated employer engagement strategy were completed in spring/early summer 2022. A final list of internships offered by 4 public sector agencies was completed in October 2024.

Outputs	Measures	Narrative Descriptions of Progress
	Create a partnership with LinkedIn Premier to establish ongoing communication with employers and address skills development/needs in the emerging workforce	The contract with LinkedIn was developed in July 2024 and executed on November 15, 2024.
Formal mechanism for obtaining input from employers on curriculum design, either as extended session of RAB and/or as separate convening for facilitation	Industry review of BIP stackable certificates and degree program	Following a series of meetings with faculty from partner colleges about curriculum modification, the partners conducted curriculum reviews of existing BUSTEC and related programming in summer 2021 and winter 2021.
	Produce a quarterly report on faculty engagement with public sector industry and employers	Quarterly faculty engagement reports were delayed. The first report was completed in fall 2022, and reports continued through all project quarters.
Business Services as an occupational cluster in the public sector recognized at regional level	Strategic plan developed as a framework to structure and promote skills and jobs in business services cluster	In December 2022, Valley Vision developed a strategic plan to help frame the need for the BIP programming, using data from a labor market analysis for Business Information Professionals from the Centers of Excellence.

Outcome Area 2b. Percent of employers that change policies to better support work-based learning opportunities and/or employment, retention, and advancement of career pathway participants

Grantee Customized Outcome: Growth in the number of public sector employers committed to trialing and integrating new methods and platforms into current public sector recruitment methods

Table 7 includes each program activity or output for Outcome Area 2b and narrative descriptions of the progress made through December 2024, the end of the grant cycle.

Table 7. Outcome Area 2b: Outputs, Measures, and Progress Descriptions

Outputs	Measures	Narrative Descriptions of Progress
Critical analysis of recruitment, application, and hiring processes among public sector employers in the region	Report produced	In 2021, the ILG helped disseminate a survey to public sector employers to help inform curriculum design, work experience considerations, and outreach and engagement strategies. 29 partners responded to the survey. Valley Vision presented survey results at a RAB meeting.
	Summary of current state of recruitment, application, and hiring processes, and identify gaps	In 2024, the new project director developed interview questions for regional workforce partners to understand skills acquisition and retention. Valley Vision sent out the questions in a survey and received 16 responses.
Pilot of new platforms for recruitment/hiring among public sector employers established	Pilot test plan developed with commitment from 2 public sector employers	The pilot test was canceled. The project team asked RAB members for information on flexibility regarding piloting/testing recruitment hiring platforms and practices. RAB feedback was that systemic constraints within the public sector prevent modifications.
	Assessment of user experience and application submissions during pilot	Because the pilot was cancelled, project leadership developed a list of internships offered by 4 public sector agencies was completed in October 2024.
	Establish LinkedIn Premier contract	The contract with LinkedIn was developed in July 2024 and executed on November 15, 2024.

Outputs	Measures	Narrative Descriptions of Progress
Public sector recruitment and hiring policies/practices modified	Number of public sector employer contacts in the Handshake hiring platform increases from approximately 130 to 150	The anticipated increase in employer contacts in Handshake was tied to plans to pilot new recruitment platforms. Discussions with district staff and RAB members about integrating the Handshake platform into employer-engagement activities were held and reported. However, the project team learned that the use of hiring platforms in the public system is restricted to authorized platforms, and that constraints on modifying practices exist. See the previous section of this table for more information. The team will be addressing recruitment and hiring outputs using LinkedIn.

Core Element 3: Enhanced Career Pathway Programs and Accelerated Learning Strategies

Table 8. Core Element 3: Outcome Areas, Grantee Customized Outcomes, and Evaluation Questions

Outcome Area	Grantee Customized Outcome	Evaluation Question
3a: Design or implementation of new, accelerated instructional techniques or technologies, including the use of advanced online and technology-enabled learning	3a: Growth to 3 cohorts with a total of 120 students are enrolled in BIW/BIP programs that are delivered through the ACE model for BIW degree program delivery, improving time to completion and number of awards[11]	EQ2: How was the SCC project able to enhance career pathways programming and accelerated learning strategies for adult learners?

[11] The original outcome was growth to four cohorts. This outcome was changed to 3 cohorts because Sacramento City College withdrew from the project.

Outcome Area	Grantee Customized Outcome	Evaluation Question
3b: Measure of restructuring or alignment of educational and training programs based on local or regional labor market data	3b: 3 new BIP awards that embed industry-recognized Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) certifications reflective of the skill sets required by public sector employers	EQ3: To what extent did the project improve alignment and integration with regional workforce partners and streamline or expand services for career pathway participants?

Outcome Area 3a. Design or implementation of new, accelerated instructional techniques or technologies, including the use of advanced online and technology-enabled learning

Grantee Customized Outcome: Growth to 3 cohorts with a total of 120 students are enrolled in BIW/BIP programs which are delivered through the ACE model for BIW degree program delivery, improves time to completion and number of awards

Table 9 includes each program activity or output for Outcome Area 3a and narrative descriptions of the progress made through December 2024, the end of the grant cycle.

Table 9. Outcome Area 3a: Outputs, Measures, and Progress Descriptions

Outputs	Measures	Narrative Descriptions of Progress
Redesigned curriculum for the BIP program, using Accelerated College Education (ACE) model	District-level curriculum committee approval of redesigned curriculum	The Curriculum Group developed the redesigned curriculum. 3 programs were developed: 2 certificates (BIP I and BIP II) and 1 A.S. degree (Business Information Technology). The 2 certificates have been approved and are in the course catalogs for the 3 participating colleges. The curriculum for the A.S. degree is awaiting final approval.

Outputs	Measures	Narrative Descriptions of Progress
New ACE curriculum is scheduled as experimental courses for enrollment	ACE sections published in the course catalogs and the schedule of classes	The ACE sections are published in the course catalogs and schedule of classes. The courses are offered in multiple formats (16 weeks, 8 weeks, and 6 weeks). The Core and Curriculum Groups will regularly assess the success of the courses and use student persistence and completion data, as well as student feedback, to make decisions about program improvement. All courses will provide students with the option to take them asynchronously.
3 cohorts enrolled in ACE sections over the course of the project timeline	• Cohort #1 enrolled • Cohort #2 enrolled • Cohort #3 enrolled • Los Rios College Online (LRCO) Cohort #4 enrolled	120 students are currently enrolled in the BUSTEC/BIP track. The program experienced delays in hiring a counselor, which has delayed the process of formally matriculating these students into the BIP cohorts. In addition, district shifts in priorities discontinued the LRCO programming and infrastructure. A modification was submitted to the DOL in August 2024 and approved to focus on 3 cohorts instead of 4. The cohort model is scheduled to begin in January 2025 with all support systems in place.
Faculty trained in the design and delivery of online courses	4 faculty complete college-specific online teaching methods	All BUSTEC faculty have been certified in online teaching methods and universal design.
	Faculty training for online teaching and universal design	Some courses are certified through the Instructional Institute Center for Teaching and Learning.
	Integration of Tailspin VR into the instructional design and delivery	The contract for Tailspin VR was executed in November 2024.

Outputs	Measures	Narrative Descriptions of Progress
Submission of BIP online courses to local Peer Online Course Review (POCR) process for quality review and approval	10 classes submitted to POCR	All courses were submitted to the POCR on June 30, 2023. The 2 BIP certifications have been approved. Approval for the A.S. degree is pending the approval of a capstone course.

Outcome Area 3b. Measure of restructuring or alignment of educational and training programs based on local or regional labor market data

Grantee Customized Outcome: 3 new BIP awards that embed industry recognized Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) certifications reflective of the skill sets required by public sector employers

Table 10 includes each program activity or output for Outcome Area 3b and narrative descriptions of the progress made through December 2024, the end of the grant cycle.

Table 10. Outcome Area 3b: Outputs, Measures, and Progress Descriptions

Outputs	Measures	Narrative Descriptions of Progress
Mechanism established through RAB provides partner input to provide curriculum design and review process	New curriculum developed or refined	Cluster of 4 key partners for business services in the public sector was established as part of the RAB and convened 4 times. This group provided input on the process of designing and reviewing the curriculum.

Outputs	Measures	Narrative Descriptions of Progress
Curriculum for 2 new stacked certificates and 1 new A.S. degree was developed	Approval from the district-level curriculum committee	The curriculum for 2 certificates and the A.S. Degree were approved by the RAB in spring 2022 and spring 2023 respectively.
	New BIP courses published in Course Catalog and Schedule of Classes	Beginning in fall 2024, the new BIP I and BIP II courses are published in the course catalogs at each partner institution. The courses for the A.S degree are published in the FLC schedule of classes. They will be published in the schedule of classes at ARC and CRC after approval,
Curriculum for 1 new fully online BIP A.S. degree, eligible for delivery through the district (LRCO was discontinued in 2023)	New districtwide curriculum committee established	The curriculum for a new BIP A.S. degree was developed and submitted for approval. District shifts in priorities discontinued the LRCO programming and infrastructure.
Integration of industry-recognized badging via partnerships with AMA OnDemand, IAAP, ASAP/PACE, and Skillsoft	Contracts for services are established (AMA OnDemand, IAAP, ASAP/PACE, Skillsoft)	Contracts for services were established with AMA OnDemand, ASAP/PACE, and Skillsoft in November 2024. The contract with IAAP is in process.
Average number of completers with Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) certifications increases annually	75% of students in BIP program will pass 1 or more MOS certifications	The number of students who took MOS certification exams to attempt certification increased over time, from 88 students in 2020/21 to 345 in 2023/24. The individual pass rates for each MOS exam in 2024: more than 75 percent passed Excel in summer 2024 (78.5%); Outlook in spring 2024 (76.9%); PowerPoint in spring 2024 (100%); and Word in summer 2024 (100%).

Outputs	Measures	Narrative Descriptions of Progress
Integrated brand identity campaign for public sector careers and BIP programs is implemented	MOU established with marketing firm to develop communication strategy and campaign resources	No marketing firm was used because of lengthy procurement and contract review processes. Instead, the Core Group is in the process of developing a marketing plan in collaboration with the public information officer at each college.
	At least 1 campaign wave executed, response rates analyzed, and plan adjusted to optimize results	The first campaign will be executed in winter 2024.
Metrics for changes from baseline in perception/awareness are established and tracked	Change in baseline marketing metrics	Measurement of changes in perception/awareness of the BIP pathway will occur after the first marketing campaign is launched.

Core Element 4: Strategic Alignment with Workforce Development System

Table 11. Core Element 4: Outcome Areas, Grantee Customized Outcomes, and Evaluation Questions

Outcome Area	Grantee Customized Outcome	Evaluation Question
4a: Increase in program and policy alignment across systems and/or decrease in duplicative services or service gaps	4a: Introduction of 3 new student-centered processes (referrals, placement, and reporting) developed with SETA (WIOA partner), facilitation for increased integration of people with employment barriers into BIP training and placement in public sector careers	EQ3: To what extent did the project improve alignment and integration with regional workforce partners and streamline or expand services for career pathway participants?

Outcome Area	Grantee Customized Outcome	Evaluation Question
4b: Development of new and/or expanded partnerships among key system actors that result in streamlined or expanded services for participants	4b: New partnerships with Capital Adult Education Regional Consortium (CAERC) and Institute for Local Government (ILG) lead to a streamlined pathway and increased opportunities for adult learners to access the public sector career pathway	EQ3: To what extent did the project improve alignment and integration with regional workforce partners and streamline or expand services for career pathway participants?

Outcome Area 4a. Increase in program and policy alignment across systems and/or decrease in duplicative services or service gaps

Grantee Customized Outcome: Introduction of 3 new student-centered processes (referrals, placement, and reporting) developed with SETA (WIOA partner), facilitate increased integration of people with employment barriers into BIP training and placement in public sector careers

Table 12 includes each program activity or output for Outcome Area 4a and narrative descriptions of the progress made through December 2024, the end of the grant cycle.

Table 12. Outcome Area 4a: Outputs, Measures, and Progress Descriptions

Outputs	Measures	Narrative Descriptions of Progress
Revamped processes to manage referrals and coordinate student support services	Joint assessment of current processes with baseline findings and recommendations	The process for assessing student referrals with baseline findings and recommendations was completed in 2021.
Redesigned reporting process to capture progress of BIP program participants and input on program experience for continuous improvement	Recommendations prioritized for implementation and tracking outcomes	The recommendations were prioritized for implementation and tracking outcomes beginning in 2022.

Outputs	Measures	Narrative Descriptions of Progress
Processes and reporting are extended/adapted to create process for students/clients referred to online BIP program training through LinkedIn Premier	Project partners agreed-upon metrics and format for monthly reports; meet to address issues as needed	The metrics and format for monthly reports were agreed upon in collaboration with SETA, and the other project partners met to address issues (e.g. students with previous credits can submit a petition for credits or a substitution).
	Write an addendum to report career pathway participants who are enrolled in fully online BIP program	The addendum will not be incorporated into the report because no fully online cohort will be enrolled by the completion of the grant.
	Establish LinkedIn Premier contract to support student professional goal mapping	The contract with LinkedIn Premier was developed in July 2024 and executed on November 15, 2024. Beginning in January 2025, LinkedIn will be part of the steps that students take to map their professional goals.

Outcome Area 4b. Development of new and/or expanded partnerships among key system actors that result in streamlined or expanded services for participants

Grantee Customized Outcome: New partnerships with Capital Adult Education Regional Consortium (CAERC) and Institute for Local Government (ILG) lead to a streamlined pathway and increased opportunities for adult learners to access the public sector career pathway

Table 13 includes each program activity or output for Outcome Area 4b and narrative descriptions of the progress made through December 2024, the end of the grant cycle.

Table 13. Outcome Area 4b: Outputs, Measures, and Progress Descriptions

Outputs	Measures	Narrative Descriptions of Progress
Alignment of CAERC adult education courses with Los Rios District BIP pathway, to streamline the transition to career education for adult education students	3 roadmaps that outline the courses needed for 2 BIP certificates and 1 A.S. degree	The curriculum for 2 certificates and the A.S. degree were converted to the ACE model. They were approved by the RAB in spring 2022 and spring 2023, respectively. Beginning in fall 2024, the new BIP curriculum was published in the course catalogs at each partner institution and in the schedule of classes. Pathways and opportunities were streamlined in partnership with CAERC by building bridges from adult education classes directly to BIP classes and through articulation.
	District policy agreement on credit for prior learning	A district-level policy was established on credit for prior learning in December 2023.
Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) certifications and Administrative Professional A.S. degree become eligible for Eligible Provider Training List funds	Evidence-based analysis of demand for MOS certification by regional public sector employers to inform modification of current flex activities, trainings, and program launch	An analysis of the demand for MOS certification was completed and informed the modification of the curriculum.
Establish partnership with LinkedIn to streamline process and student placements and analytics	Provide LinkedIn integration and coaching for faculty and students through LinkedIn Premier	The contract with LinkedIn was developed in July 2024 and executed on November 15, 2024. The LinkedIn Premier service offers opportunities for student placements, such as syncing skills on student profiles and guidance on career options.

Core Element 5: Innovative Systems Change

Table 14. Core Element 5: Outcome Areas, Grantee Customized Outcomes, and Evaluation Questions

Outcome Area	Grantee Customized Outcome	Evaluation Question
5a: Measure of removing significant systemic barriers for career pathway participants	5a: Integration of ACE model into BIP programs ensures easier access to courses and dedicated resources, leading to stronger rates of retention and completion	EQ4: To what extent did the project improve access to robust work-based learning opportunities to facilitate the success of participants in career pathways?
5b: Increase in linkages developed throughout a career pathway, to encompass bridge programs, career and technical training programs, and work-based learning	5b: Increased exposure to public sector careers through work-based learning opportunities within the BIP pathway to support program enrollment and retention	EQ4: To what extent did the project improve access to robust work-based learning opportunities to facilitate the success of participants in career pathways?

Outcome Area 5a. Measure of removing significant systemic barriers for career pathway participants

Grantee Customized Outcome: Integration of ACE model into BIP programs ensures easier access to courses and dedicated resources, leading to stronger rates of retention and completion

Table 15 includes each program activity or output for Outcome Area 5a and narrative descriptions of the progress made through December 2024, the end of the grant cycle.

Table 15. Outcome Area 5a: Outputs, Measures, and Progress Descriptions

Outputs	Measures	Narrative Descriptions of Progress
Implementation of degree plan with term-specific courses for BIP ACE cohorts	Number of courses (target: 27) converted to ACE model	The curriculum for 2 certificates and the A.S. degree were converted to the ACE model. They were approved by the RAB in spring 2022 and spring 2023, respectively. Beginning in fall 2024, the new BIP curriculum was published in the course catalogs at each partner institution and in the schedule of classes.
Implementation of opt-out scheduling and sequential course enrollment through the admissions and enrollment department	Protocol for course auto-enrollment of BIP ACE cohorts	The protocol for course auto-enrollment of BIP ACE cohorts was completed in spring 2024. In spring 2025, the schedule design across the 3 colleges will be implemented to maximize course availability for students and facilitate reentry if students stop out.
Implementation of proactive advising programs designed to affect student success in the BIP program	1 peer mentorship support network	A faculty and peer mentorship support network program and a BIP online tutoring program to support student support and success were developed.
	1 BIP online tutoring program	Asynchronous online tutoring is in place for all colleges for some courses. Students will also have access to LinkedIn Learning for personalized instruction.
	Career success coaching for faculty and students through LinkedIn	LinkedIn will make training on career success coaching available to faculty and peer coaches.

Outputs	Measures	Narrative Descriptions of Progress
Improved user experience with enhancements to LRCO infrastructure	New dedicated portal for LRCO recruitment and outreach activities	No recruitment, outreach, or onboarding has been delivered through the LRCO portal because the district discontinued LRCO programming and infrastructure.
	Automated orientation and onboarding process delivered through portal	
BIP participants in need of a laptop to participate in remote instruction are provided with a device	Number of students receiving laptops	The voucher program through Follett will allow students to purchase laptops if needed, as well as textbooks and subscriptions. The contract for the partnership with Follett is in process.
	Annual survey of students, faculty, and staff for continuous program improvement	The annual student, faculty, and staff survey and the process for using feedback for continuous improvement will be developed in collaboration with instructional faculty and other interested parties, will begin in fall 2025.
3 BIP programs are delivered using the ACE model, and integrated training models provided through partnership subscriptions	Curriculum incorporating ACE model in the course catalogs	Beginning in fall 2024, the new BIP curriculum that incorporates the ACE model (2 certificates—and the A.S. degree) is published in the course catalogs at each partner institution and in the schedule of classes.
AMA OnDemand, LinkedIn Learning, ASAP/PACE, and Skillsoft	The programs integrate training models through AMA OnDemand, LinkedIn Learning, ASAP/PACE, and Skillsoft	The course modalities are online, hybrid, and accelerated. The courses and teaching methods are intentionally designed to improve learning and engagement through student engagement and universal access. Students will have asynchronous access to Skillsoft, ASAP/PACE, LinkedIn Learning, and AMA OnDemand. Contracts with these partners were executed.

Outcome Area 5b. Increase in linkages developed throughout a career pathway, to encompass bridge programs, career and technical training programs, and work-based learning

Grantee Customized Outcome: Increased exposure to public sector careers through work-based learning opportunities within BIP pathway, supports program enrollment and retention

Table 16 includes each program activity or output for Outcome Area 5b and narrative descriptions of the progress made through December 2024, the end of the grant cycle.

Table 16. Outcome Area 5b: Outputs, Measures, and Progress Descriptions

Outputs	Measures	Narrative Descriptions of Progress
Increased opportunities for BIP students to apply for internships with public sector employers	3 new public sector employers offering work experience opportunities	A list of potential internships for BIP students was developed in June 2022 and was updated in fall 2024.
	Use information from LinkedIn to update the list of work experience opportunities for students	Through ongoing engagement with LinkedIn, the list of work experience opportunities will be updated regularly. The partnership contract with LinkedIn was executed in November 2024.
Revitalized employer and student participation in career events	• Annual increase of 1–2 employer partners in ARC workshop "How to Get a State Job" • At least 10 BIP students participate in first-ever Career & Public Service Day • Work-based learning activities will consist of 3 career fair events at least 1 semester prior to a cohort's anticipated graduation date	Career events are currently being designed and will be offered to students through LinkedIn beginning in January 2025.

Outputs	Measures	Narrative Descriptions of Progress
	Establish a contract with LinkedIn for coaching for faculty and students	LinkedIn Premier, with resources for students to compete in the job market and meet industry expectations for recruitment and tracking, is available to students. LinkedIn will also provide training to faculty and students on student success coaching. The contract with LinkedIn was executed in November 2024.

Findings

> *"We want to make it easier for a student to take this program and to get the certificate across multiple colleges, but how do we get all these colleges? We were all on board, but we didn't know what kind of boat we were driving."*
>
> *Core/Curriculum Group Member*

The evaluation of Los Rios District's SCC project adopted a descriptive study design and phased evaluation structure to explore and document learning across core project elements, phases, and processes. It used a mix of developmental, formative, and outcome evaluation approaches to identify areas where the project has experienced and overcome challenges and where successes have been achieved. The evaluation team reviewed and analyzed data from meeting observations, program documentation review, presentation and partner summary reports, and quarterly narrative reports (QNRs). The team also conducted focus groups and interviews with RAB members, employer engagement partners and the Project Leadership, Core Group, and Curriculum Group members (see Appendix B for the interview protocol used in fall 2024).

The evaluation findings show that the project ultimately established a culture of cross-institutional collaboration among partnering faculty; aligned and leveraged education and workforce aims to develop the new BIP curriculum; and strengthened existing employer engagement and created new employer engagement to innovate student training and programming. Specifically, evaluation findings highlight that the project has

- established cross-institutional collaboration among partnering faculty from the district's participating community colleges and leveraged employer engagement/investment to create a regional advisory board, analyze and review the alignment between industry needs and curriculum, and develop employer engagement and internship strategies [Core Element 2 Finding];

- aligned and leveraged partners, education and employer interests, and local/regional demand to create the new BIP curriculum, with certificates, accelerated learning strategies, and as a pathway into public sector administration careers [Core Element 3 Finding];
- developed BIP pathway and curriculum that incorporate strategies and entry points for students to access learning, build needed industry-level skills, acquire competencies for market demand, receive supports, and to access information about internships and careers [Core Element 4 Finding]; and
- assessed, offered recommendations for, and modified student referrals, tracking, and reporting processes across partners/systems to streamline programming, policies, and services [Core Element 5 Finding].

Following the structure used throughout this report, the following sections organize and detail the themes, results, and/or highlights from the evaluation activities by the core elements of the grant program, aligned evaluation questions, and outcome areas.

Core Element 2: Sector Strategies and Employer Engagement

Table 17. Core Element 2: Outcome Areas, Grantee Customized Outcomes, and Evaluation Questions

Outcome Area	Grantee Customized Outcome	Evaluation Question
2a: Increase in the level and depth of employer engagement and investment in educational and training programs	2a: Establishment of a new, organized cluster and regional advisory board for business services in the public sector, leads to more strategic engagement of employers and a mechanism for developing curriculum that is responsive to workforce needs	EQ1: To what extent has the project increased levels and types of employer engagement and support for pathways, student employment, retention, and advancement of career pathway participants?
2b: Percent of employers that change policies to better support work-based learning opportunities and/or employment, retention, and advancement of career pathway participants	2b: Growth in the number of public sector employers committed to trialing and integrating new methods and platforms into current public sector recruitment methods	EQ1: To what extent has the project increased levels and types of employer engagement and support for pathways, student employment, retention, and advancement of career pathway participants?

Evaluation Question 1: To what extent has the project increased levels and types of employer engagement and support for pathways, student employment, retention, and advancement of career pathway participants?

Outcome Area 2a: Increase in the level and depth of employer engagement and investment in educational and training programs

The project established cross-institutional collaboration among partnering faculty from the district's participating community colleges and leveraged employer engagement/investment through curriculum alignment and development efforts. Activities included engaging regional workforce partners to create a regional advisory board (RAB), develop employer engagement and internship strategies, and provide formalized input on the BIP curriculum.

Employers were engaged with the project through the Regional Advisory Board.

The project's primary mechanism for engaging employers was through regularly scheduled RAB meetings. Valley Vision, a civic leadership organization in Sacramento connected Los Rios District partners with industry and government employers. It organized the RAB meetings and ensured that they were a platform for active employer engagement and collaboration.

Until 2024, the RAB meetings took place twice per year. The key RAB members were the Institute for Local Government (ILG), the Capital Adult Education Regional Consortium (CAERC), and the Sacramento Employment and Training Agency (SETA). In addition to participating in RAB meetings, the ILG distributed a survey to its members to understand the skills that future employees need and the various employment opportunities that are available in such forms as internships and apprenticeships. CAERC, an adult education consortium, helped the Los Rios District partners create on-ramps to the BIP pathway for refugee resettlement agencies and early workforce preparation nonprofits. SETA prepared its job placement professionals at each Los Rios District college to help BIP students by facilitating workshops and providing basic and job placement support.

In addition to the primary RAB members, other organizations that participated in RAB meetings and project activities included the Sacramento County, Health Education Council, Employment Development Department, Health Education Council, and Employment Development Council; the California Department of Rehabilitation; and the Sacramento Municipal Utilities District. Employer engagement facilitated through the RAB led to all interested parties gaining a greater understanding of industry needs and to tight alignment between those needs and the newly developed curriculum.

A strategy for employer engagement and internship opportunities was developed.

To ensure that the RAB meetings provided strategic guidance, the project's regional directors met annually in May. Valley Vision developed an initial strategy report; then the partners

revised and completed it in March 2022. The report described the meetings and activities that had been conducted thus far in the project and outlined plans for future engagement. A list of potential internships offered for BIP pathway students by four public sector agencies was completed in October 2024.

A contract with LinkedIn Premier was executed in November 2024. Helping to build new employer partnerships and mentorship programs that can lead to internship opportunities for BIP pathway students and helping educators understand how to guide students to in-demand career opportunities were part of the LinkedIn partnership plan.

A formal process for curriculum input was established.

As part of the RAB meetings, employers provided input into the curriculum design. They described the importance of ensuring that future employees have strong technical and soft skills and gave feedback on the draft curriculum. To supplement the employer input, faculty reviewed the existing curriculum and provided feedback to the Curriculum Group. Quarterly engagement reports began being included in QNRs in fall 2021 and continued to be included in the QNRs until the end of the grant.

The demand for BIP programming was documented.

In December 2022, a strategic plan was developed to help frame the need for BIP programming, using data from a labor market analysis for Business Information Professionals from the Center of Excellence. This plan was summarized in a memo.

Outcome Area 2b: Percent of employers that change policies to better support work-based learning opportunities and/or employment, retention, and advancement of career pathway participants

Additionally, employer engagement included incorporating all partners, including industry partners, in analysis of local recruitment, application, and hiring processes, to garner employer input and to inform the project's efforts and BIP curriculum development.

An analysis of regional public sector employers was completed.

The ILG administered a survey to regional public sector employers to gather information on recruitment, application, and hiring processes among public sector employers in the region. Twenty-nine industry partners responded to the survey. The information gathered was used to help inform the BIP curriculum design, work experience opportunities, and strategies for outreach and engagement. Valley Vision presented the results to the RAB that included the "soft skills" (communication and critical thinking skills) that are missing in employees, the need for incumbent worker training, the perceived value of digital certifications, and the availability of internship opportunities.

The new project director developed interview questions for industry partners, which were designed to understand skills acquisition and retention, and which Valley Vision circulated

through an additional survey. The survey results were included in the End-of-Year report submitted in December 2024.

Internship opportunities for BIP students were identified

The project planned to launch a pilot in which public sector employers would use new online platforms for recruitment and hiring. However, RAB partners informed the project team that systemic constraints within the public sector would preclude using the proposed platforms. Thus, the pilot was canceled. In lieu of using an online platform, in October 2024, project leadership compiled a list of internships offered by four public sector agencies.

A contract with LinkedIn Premier was executed in November 2024. The partnership was designed to help the partners create new industry connections that would ideally lead to mentorship and internship opportunities for BIP students.

Public sector recruitment and hiring policies/practices were modified.

Piloting a new recruitment platform was expected to increase the number of employer contacts in the Handshake platform. Although discussions with district staff and RAB partners about integrating Handshake into employer engagement activities took place, the project team learned that the use of hiring platforms in the public system was restricted to authorized platforms which constrained the ability to modify practices.

Core Element 3: Enhanced Career Pathway Programs and Accelerated Learning Strategies

Table 18. Core Element 3: Outcome Areas, Grantee Customized Outcomes, and Evaluation Questions

Outcome Area	Grantee Customized Outcome	Evaluation Question
3a: Design or implementation of new, accelerated instructional techniques or technologies, including the use of advanced online and technology-enabled learning	3a: Growth to 3 cohorts with a total of 120 students are enrolled in BIW/BIP programs which are delivered through the ACE model for BIW degree program delivery, improves time to completion and number of awards[12]	EQ2: How was the SCC project able to enhance career pathways programming and accelerated learning strategies for adult learners?

[12] The original outcome was growth to four cohorts. This outcome was changed to three cohorts because Sacramento City College withdrew from the project.

Outcome Area	Grantee Customized Outcome	Evaluation Question
3b: Measure of restructuring or alignment of educational and training programs based on local or regional labor market data	3b: 3 new BIP awards that embed industry recognized Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) certifications reflective of the skill sets required by public sector employers	EQ3: To what extent did the project improve alignment and integration with regional workforce partners and streamline or expand services for career pathway participants?

Evaluation Question 2: How was the SCC project able to enhance career pathways programming and accelerated learning strategies for adult learners?

Outcome Area 3a: Design or implementation of new, accelerated instructional techniques or technologies, including the use of advanced online and technology-enabled learning

Over the course of the project, the Curriculum Group enhanced career pathway programming and accelerated learning strategies for adult learners by developing and getting approval for a redesigned curriculum for the BIP pathway. Three programs were developed, including two stacked certificates (BIP I and BIP II) and one A.S. degree (Business Information Technology). The pathway incorporates principles from the Accelerated College Education (ACE) model to offer course scheduling options, adaptive teaching and learning modalities, and transparent information about services and resources for workforce training and support. Faculty also received training in online course design and delivery.

A New BIP Stacked Certificate Program Was (Re)designed for Board Review and Approval

The new BIP certificates and degree were collaboratively (re)designed in ways that incorporated cross-institutional faculty collaboration and employer feedback. The Curriculum Group was allocated time to collaboratively discuss and identify key goals, brainstorm alignment strategies, and agree on shared outcomes. The group reviewed the curriculum at each partnering institution to inform revisions, and developed new content as needed. It also incorporated input that was collected during employer engagement activities.

In addition to informing curriculum refinements and streamlining course creation, these initial steps helped the team understand the operations systems at each campus. This knowledge clarified how the strengths and capacity at each campus could be leveraged to accelerate the complex and multileveled curriculum review process.

To streamline the curriculum approval, Folsom Lake College (FLC) led the process. The FLC representative to the Curriculum Group is the only faculty member in that campus's existing BUSTEC department which enabled her to quickly get department and campus-level approval to codify the new BIP pathway. After the curriculum was codified at FLC, the other campuses

could streamline their approval processes. This strategic collaboration enabled the team to successfully get the curriculum reviewed and approved at the department, dean, college curriculum committee, district, board, and chancellor levels.

At the time of this report, BIP courses were published in the course catalogs at all three partnering colleges.

The BIP ACE Model Was Adopted with Flexible Sections and Scheduling

The BIP curriculum that incorporates the ACE model provides students with multiple entry points into workforce training and support. Course programming includes three sequenced formats (16 weeks, 8 weeks, and 6 weeks), providing flexible scheduling options. The course levels also include hy-flex design, to allow for a combination of in-person and online options, as well as module-based schedules.

The ACE model incorporates different teaching and instructional modalities and course materials, from written text to virtual experiences (e.g., integration of TailspinVR into the instructional design and delivery). Assignments include flexible deadlines and allow for student design and choice, such as project-based learning. In these ways, the curriculum caters to students' learning styles and preferences, allowing for adaptive learning and individual autonomy.

Through the new curriculum, students are also provided with clear information about types of support and where to access it. In addition to being shared online and through emails to students, this information is, for example, included in course syllabi.

Students Were Enrolled in the BUSTEC/BIP Pathway, but Cohort Enrollment Is Forthcoming

There are currently 120 students enrolled in the BUSTEC program, some of whom were also taking courses developed for the BIP pathway. The project originally planned to enroll students in BIP ACE sections using a cohort model; however, this was delayed for several reasons. First, the curriculum approval process took longer than expected. Second, leadership and partner changes led to project disruptions. Third, the Los Rios College Online portal was discontinued (for more information, see discussions of project challenges elsewhere in this report). The final, and most important, reason for the delay in enrolling student cohorts was a delay in hiring a counselor who would have led the outreach, matriculation, and support for the BIP cohort. The first BIP cohort is expected to matriculate in January 2025.

Faculty Training in Online Course Design/Delivery Occurred, with Future Training Planned

All BUSTEC faculty have been certified in online teaching methods and in universal design. This training included participation in an online teaching institute, and training for Microsoft certification in PowerPoint, Word, and Excel Access and for PNP Professional. Faculty also received LinkedIn training during flex time activities in fall 2024.

Future faculty training opportunities with TailspinVR are currently planned. There are also plans for faculty, staff, and administration to receive integration training for Skillsoft, AMA OnDemand, and LinkedIn.

BIP Online Courses Were Submitted to the Local Peer Online Review Process

Twelve courses included in the new BIP certificates and the A.S. degree were submitted, certified, and approved by the Local Peer Online Review Process. The courses are also part of the Online Educational Initiative and the California Virtual Campus.

Evaluation Question 3: To what extent did the project improve alignment and integration with regional workforce partners and streamline or expand services for career pathway participants?

Outcome Area 3b: Measure of restructuring or alignment of educational and training programs based on local or regional labor market data

Two key project goals were to develop and enhance the BIP pathway through industry and education alignment and to create streamlined student opportunities based on local/regional demand. The Core and Curriculum Groups partnered with the RAB to understand industry, community, and educational pathway needs. They also created mechanisms for the RAB to provide curriculum review, input, and approval.

During RAB meetings, other interest holders were tapped to provide context, share perspectives, and inform approaches for addressing students' and employers' needs. One major discovery from this process was the importance of establishing a common nomenclature for pathway programming, which led to updated naming conventions and prompted better content alignment with industry demands, skills needed, stackable credentials, and student support.

Mechanisms Were Established to Elicit RAB Review, Input, and Approval for the BIP Curriculum

The RAB served as a key vehicle for convening employer partners, the project's Core Group members, and additional industry, education, and community groups. The RAB met four times during the project to consult and provide input at various stages of the BIP curriculum development.

The mechanism for eliciting the RAB's input on the BIP curriculum included presenting plans and materials after each of the BIP certificates and the A.S. degree were developed and during an in-person meeting; providing time for RAB members to review and make recommendations to draft materials; and voting to approve the materials. RAB meetings also provided a platform for shared learning and discovery across partners. The members learned, for example, that having common course naming conventions improved pathway alignment and relevant stackable credentials for education programming and industry needs.

The Curriculum for Two New Stackable Certificates and One New A.S. Degree Was Developed and Cataloged

Two new stackable certificates and one new A.S. degree were developed during the project (see the previous Outcome Area 3a section for more information). Based on the RAB's feedback, the BIP curriculum was revised until it was unanimously approved by the RAB partners.

Unanimous RAB approval for the BIP I certificate occurred in spring 2022. The BIP II certificate and the A.S. degree were approved in spring 2023. Beginning in fall 2024, the new BIP curriculum was published in each partner college's course catalog and in the schedule of classes.

Plans for Online BIP Delivery Through the LRCO Portal Were Discontinued

The new BIP A.S. degree curriculum was designed to be hosted on the Los Rios College Online (LRCO) portal. During the project, the online portal was discontinued, so the hosting plan pivoted.

Partnerships Were Conceived to Provide Online Student Opportunities Such as Badging

BIP courses incorporated hy-flex modalities and online training and learning. Partner service subscriptions were integrated into the curriculum to include opportunities for students to earn industry-recognized badging. Contracts for these services were established with AMA OnDemand, ASAP/PACE, and Skillsoft in November 2024.

The Number of Students Who Took Exams for MOS Certifications Increased between 2021 and 2024

The number of students who completed Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) certification exams increased from 88 students in 2020/21 to 345 students in 2023/24. However, the overall pass rate for these exams dipped from roughly 70 percent in 2020/21 to 54 percent in 2021/22; that rate increased to roughly 56 percent in 2022/23 and returned to 70 percent in 2023/24. The shifting rates may have been influenced by factors associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, such as changes in instructional modalities and the return to classes.

345 students took the MOS certification tests in 2024. In spring, 100 percent of students who took the PowerPoint exam earned certifications and 77 percent of students who took the Outlook exam earned the certifications. In summer, 100 percent of the students earned certifications in Word and 79 percent earned certifications in Excel.

Plans for Marketing and Branding the BIP Program Are Still in Process

Plans for marketing and branding the BIP program encountered delays and challenges. The process of developing a marketing and branding plan was scheduled to begin after the curriculum was finalized. Curriculum development delays left limited time to hire a marketing firm due to the time-consuming district procurement and contractual review and processes. As a result, the partners agreed to develop their own marketing materials and collateral to support

the project's outreach efforts, in collaboration with the public information officer at each college in 2025.

Measuring Marketing Outcomes for Program Awareness Is Slated for the Future

As previously described, curriculum development challenges resulted in delays in program marketing and branding efforts. This, in turn, resulted in a delay in developing a plan to measure marketing outcomes for program awareness. After the anticipated marketing campaigns are launched, the Core Group can begin tracking and measuring program awareness outcomes.

Core Element 4: Strategic Alignment with Workforce Development System

Table 19. Core Element 4: Outcome Areas, Grantee Customized Outcomes, and Evaluation Questions

Outcome Area	Grantee Customized Outcome	Evaluation Question
4a: Increase in program and policy alignment across systems and/or decrease in duplicative services or service gaps	4a: Introduction of 3 new student-centered processes (referrals, placement, and reporting) developed with SETA (WIOA partner), facilitate increased integration of people with employment barriers into BIP training and placement in public sector careers	EQ3: To what extent did the project improve alignment and integration with regional workforce partners and streamline or expand services for career pathway participants?
4b: Development of new and/or expanded partnerships among key system actors that result in streamlined or expanded services for participants	4b: New partnerships with Capital Adult Education Regional Consortium (CAERC) and Institute for Local Government (ILG) lead to streamlined pathways and increased opportunities for adult learners to access the public sector career pathway	EQ3: To what extent did the project improve alignment and integration with regional workforce partners and streamline or expand services for career pathway participants?

Evaluation Question 3: To what extent did the project improve alignment and integration with regional workforce partners and streamline or expand services for career pathway participants?

Outcome Area 4a: Increase in program and policy alignment across systems and/or decrease in duplicative services or service gaps

To streamline programming, policy, and services across systems, student referrals, tracking, and reporting processes were assessed for recommendations and redesign. Activities included partner agreement on criteria for BIP programming outreach and awareness, and strategies to coordinate around students' and employers' needs.

Processes for Student Referrals and Support Services Were Assessed and Reporting Processes Were Redesigned

Joint assessments, in collaboration with SETA, on referral processes and for coordinating student support services occurred and were completed in 2021. The assessments resulted in baseline findings and recommendations. Recommendations for reporting BIP pathway participants' progress and their program experiences were also provided, with implementation and tracking outcomes beginning in 2022.

An MOU dated October 2024 outlined new student-centered processes for referrals, placement, and reporting, which the three partner colleges developed with SETA. The MOU sets out process criteria for outreach and awareness activities around BIP programming; ways of responding to students' and employers' needs; and meetings, reporting, and shared documentation.

Another process for referrals was developed with CAERC to build bridges from adult education classes directly to the BIP pathway. They designed a specific articulation to align with the Los Rios Refugee Career Pathway program.

Processes for Student Referrals and Reporting Were Extended to Include Online BIP Program Training, Incorporating LinkedIn Premier

Through a partnership with LinkedIn, LinkedIn Premier was selected as a new online subscription-based service provided to BIP students. The contract with LinkedIn Premier was executed in November 2024, and the service will be available to students as part of the student mapping of professional goals in January 2025.

Outcome Area 4b: Development of new and/or expanded partnerships among key system actors that result in streamlined or expanded services for participants

Partnerships among dedicated education, workforce, and industry partners were developed, reinforced, and expanded upon during the project. Partners came together with mutually beneficial interests and aims, such as the need to streamline education services, grow a public

sector workforce base, and advance education and career training for populations of adult learners within the region.

CAERC Adult Education Courses Were Aligned with the BIP Pathway

In partnership with CAERC, the project team designed articulation to build bridges from adult education classes directly to BIP classes. As previously described, the project developed an articulation pathway with the Los Rios Refugee Career Pathway program, in partnership with refugee resettlement agencies and early workforce preparation nonprofits. In 2023, the district developed a policy that allowed these students to earn credit for prior learning.

New Partnership with LinkedIn Helped to Inform Strategies for Student- and Industry-Aligned Training and Career Opportunities and Analysis of Demand for MOS Certification

The demand for MOS certification was analyzed to inform student- and industry-aligned recommendations for the BIP program's flex activities, trainings, and launch. The results informed modifications of the curriculum. The project's Core Group analysis of the demand for MOS certification informed and streamlined possibilities for students' access to jobs and placements.

LinkedIn Premier will allow students to sync their skills with their LinkedIn profiles to make students more discoverable by recruiters; will help build new employer partnerships and mentorship programs that can lead to internship opportunities; and will provide information to faculty and staff to guide students to in-demand career options. Additionally, the colleges will benefit from better tracking of alumni to analyze program outcomes and improved alumni relationships.

Core Element 5: Innovative Systems Change

Table 20. Core Element 5: Outcome Areas, Grantee Customized Outcomes, and Evaluation Questions

Outcome Area	Grantee Customized Outcome	Evaluation Question
5a: Measure of removing significant systemic barriers for career pathway participants	5a: Integration of ACE model into BIP programs ensures easier access to courses and dedicated resources, leading to stronger rates of retention and completion	EQ4: To what extent did the project improve access to robust work-based learning opportunities to facilitate the success of participants in career pathways?

Outcome Area	Grantee Customized Outcome	Evaluation Question
5b: Increase in linkages developed throughout a career pathway, to encompass bridge programs, career and technical training programs, and work-based learning	5b: Increased exposure to public sector careers through work-based learning opportunities within the BIP pathway, supports program enrollment and retention	EQ4: To what extent did the project improve access to robust work-based learning opportunities to facilitate the success of participants in career pathways?

Evaluation Question 4: To what extent did the project improve access to robust work-based learning opportunities to facilitate the success of participants in career pathways?

Outcome Area 5a: Measure of removing significant systemic barriers for career pathway participants

The BIP curriculum incorporates various strategies and entry points for students to access learning, to build needed industry-level skills, to develop competencies for market demand, and to receive supports. These strategies include designing the curriculum with Adaptability, Connection, and Equity (ACE) principles; creating opt-out scheduling and sequential course enrollment; and developing opportunities for student support resources and networks.

BIP Curriculum with ACE Principles Was Designed

The BIP curriculum includes two certificates and the A.S. degree incorporated the principles of Adaptability, Connection, and Equity (ACE).

The BIP curriculum is adaptable in that it includes learning strategies such as flexible deadlines and student-designed coursework. The courses are structured for both part-time and full-time students and allow for seamless transitions between the certificate and degree programs. The courses are also offered in various formats, including 6-, 8-, and 16-week sessions.

Connection in the BIP curriculum refers to activities that are linked to real-world contexts, including community-focused activities, to help develop connections among students, faculty, and their communities.

Equity is integrated into the BIP curriculum through universal design for learning, allowing students to show their mastery of the material in multiple ways. Courses also use open educational resources to minimize the financial burden on students. In the partnership with Follett, students can use a voucher to cover the costs of software or certifications, as needed.

The principles of Adaptability, Connection, and Equity (ACE) were intentionally incorporated into the BIP curriculum to provide a dynamic and responsive educational environment that meets the diverse needs of the BIP students. The BIP I curriculum was approved by the RAB in

spring 2022 and the BIP II curriculum was approved in spring 2023. Beginning in fall 2024, the courses for BIP I and BIP II were published in the course catalogs and schedule of classes at each partner institution. A.S. degree courses were also published in the FLC course catalog in fall 2024 and will be published in ARC and CRC's course catalogs after they are formally approved.

Opt-Out Scheduling and Sequential Course Enrollment Were Implemented

The admissions and enrollment department finalized the protocol for course auto-enrollment of BIP cohorts in spring 2024. In spring 2025, the schedule design across the three colleges will be implemented to maximize course availability for students and facilitate reentry if students stop out.

Proactive Advising Programs Were Designed

Through the SCC grant, the project team developed a faculty and peer mentorship support network program and a BIP online tutoring program to support student success. In addition, asynchronous online tutoring was available for some courses at the participating colleges. The partnership with LinkedIn will enable BIP students to have access to LinkedIn Learning for personalized instruction and will also provide training on career success coaching for faculty and peer coaches, to prepare them for tutoring and mentoring program participation.

User Experience Improvements Were Not Integrated into Los Rios District Colleges' Online Infrastructure

The plan to enhance the LRCO portal with new recruitment, outreach, and/or onboarding features was not implemented because the district discontinued the LRCO portal infrastructure.

BIP Participants Will Be Provided with Laptops and Materials, and Programming Will Be Continuously Evaluated

Through the partnership with Follett, a voucher will be available to BIP students. This voucher, for $100 per unit for up to $6,000, can be used for supplies, materials, or subscriptions, including laptops. The contract for the partnership with Follett is in process.

An annual student, faculty, and staff survey will be developed in collaboration with instructional faculty and other interested parties, beginning in fall 2025. Survey data will be used for continuous program improvement.

Three BIP Programs Incorporating ACE Principles Were Delivered

Beginning in fall 2024, the new BIP curriculum that incorporates ACE principles (two certificates and the A.S. degree) is published in the course catalogs at each partner institution and in the schedule of classes.

The course modalities are online, hybrid, and accelerated. The courses and teaching methods are intentionally designed to improve learning and engagement through student engagement and universal access. Students will have asynchronous access to Skillsoft, ASAP/PACE, LinkedIn

Learning, and AMA OnDemand. Contracts with these partners were executed in November 2024.

Outcome Area 5b: Increase in linkages developed throughout a career pathway, to encompass bridge programs, career and technical training programs, and work-based learning

In addition to having developed the BIP curriculum to incorporate multiple entry points for student training, skill development, and supports, project leaders and partners have strategized students' access to career information. For example, BIP students have access to information on internships with public sector employers, and the project team and other partners have discussed future career events.

BIP Students Have Access to Information on Internships with Public Sector Employers

A list of potential internships for BIP students was developed in June 2022 and was updated in fall 2024. Current BIP students have access to this information. Through ongoing engagement with LinkedIn, the list of work experience opportunities will be updated regularly.

Career Events Will Be Offered to BIP Students

Career events are currently being designed and will be offered to students through LinkedIn beginning in January 2025. LinkedIn Premier, with resources for students to compete in the job market and meet industry expectations for recruitment and tracking, will also be available to students in January 2025. Further, LinkedIn will provide training to faculty and students on student success coaching.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations

> *"I think the biggest win for this project is that we've been able to collaborate as humans, as faculty from a local district, with three different colleges over a number of years, and really begin to see eye to eye on what we're trying to do for our students."*
>
> *Core/Curriculum Group Member*

Key Project Successes

The project achieved several notable milestones and significant successes. These successes showed transformative outcomes across key areas, including project implementation, systems change efforts, long-term sustainability, enhanced employer engagement, and innovative curriculum development.

Implementation Successes

The project partners described several project implementation successes. They reported being proud that the group was not competitive, contrary to their typical experiences working across colleges. Instead, they described the colleges coming together in a collaborative way to improve systems at the college and district levels. They reported strong and consistent communication through intentionally structured processes and consistent meeting schedules; faculty who were willing to have conversations outside of their disciplines; and openness to the idea of restructuring the curriculum. The focus of the work, one partner explained, was "squarely on working together for the good of the students."

The project team's perseverance was another marker of success. The curriculum approval process was significantly more time-consuming than the consortium had planned. The

challenges that the team faced while attempting to get the curriculum approved at all levels of the bureaucracy proved frustrating and seemed intractable at times. Partner staff explained that their strong collaboration enabled them to overcome the many obstacles and barriers they faced.

The project team also reported considering it a success that they were able to pivot the project activities late in the contract cycle, when the project management changed in March 2024. After they identified ways to restructure the activities to emphasize student support rather than staff salaries, they were able to implement the changes despite the short timeline. Beginning in March 2024, the new project director collaborated with the U.S. Department of Labor to revise the scope of work and established structures to ensure clear and consistent communication and to share documents and reports with the team. During the remainder of the project cycle, through December 2024, the director and the team strengthened existing partnerships and established new partners—notably, several subscription partners—to ensure that the project goals were achieved. The team collaborated to overcome bureaucratic delays by leveraging existing relationships with college- and district-level colleagues and identifying key institutional partners to support their work.

Systems Change and Sustainability Successes

The partners described the sustainable systemic change that occurred at the program and student levels.

At the program level, the partners developed standardized course content across the participating campuses. To support students and counselors in identifying transferable courses applicable to their major at any campus, similar courses are now cross-listed and will eventually share unified course names and numbers across institutions.

The college partners established safeguards to ensure that the aligned curriculum remains consistent across institutions. They agreed to participate in annual interdepartmental meetings, providing a structured opportunity to discuss potential revisions to the shared curriculum. These meetings are organized to ensure that each course is formally reviewed and, if necessary, revised at least once every three years. Additionally, an accountability mechanism is embedded in Socrates, the online system. If one partner proposes a change to the curriculum, the other partners will automatically receive a notification requesting their approval. To ensure continuity, the main partner from each college committed to preparing a successor before leaving their institution, providing hands-on training to ensure smooth program operation and sustainability.

Because the program marketing and outreach were delayed, the partners committed to developing an outreach strategy and marketing materials to boost student enrollment. One partner expressed that, "even though it's outside of the timeline of the grant, we're still going to be pushing on."

At the student level, program participants have access to ongoing career readiness and upskilling opportunities through their LinkedIn Premier and LinkedIn Learning accounts.

Employer Engagement Successes

The partners described the project as having developed a successful bridge between education and employment. The Curriculum Group received insights from local employers about the skills and knowledge that future employees need to succeed and incorporated that information into the curriculum including two stackable certificates (BIP I, BIP II) and the A.S. degree (Business Information Technology).

Project leadership created a partnership with LinkedIn and the formal contract was executed in November 2024. This partnership will provide LinkedIn Premier to all students on one campus and an additional lifetime LinkedIn Learning subscription for BIP students. The program will support students to ensure that their LinkedIn profiles are discoverable to recruiters. LinkedIn Learning will also provide training to faculty and students on student success coaching. Further, the LinkedIn partnership will help to build new employer partnerships and mentorship programs, which can lead to student internship opportunities and provide information to faculty and staff to guide students to in-demand career options. The partner colleges will also benefit from better program alumni tracking through LinkedIn, which will enable them to analyze program outcomes and improve alumni relationships.

Curriculum Development Successes

A tangible outcome of the strong collaboration across colleges was the curriculum that they created together. One partner reported that they felt successful because they developed "courses that are informed, relevant to industry," and that took them out of their "comfort zones."

Key Project Challenges

As described throughout this report, challenges resulted in implementation delays and shifts in the project's plans. Notable project challenges included a lack of transparency around grant requirements and activities, changes in leadership, the loss of a partnering college, and bureaucratic delays around contract approvals and hiring staff.

Implementation, Systems Change, and Sustainability Challenges

Key implementation challenges included gaps in understanding of grant requirements and activities; a management transition; a change in a partner institution; bureaucratic delays; and delays in hiring staff.

Project partners reported that they were unclear about the project's milestones. When the leadership changed and milestones were reviewed, the partners realized that they were unaware of the broader project context (e.g., deadlines and deliverables) and activities with other partners (e.g., the project team did not have access to reports), and thus, the partners' understanding of project expectations and deliverables was different than what was required by the grant. While revisiting the scope of work, the Core Group also realized that it had lost some opportunities that it could have leveraged for project implementation (e.g., deadlines to purchase desired resources and equipment had passed). In response, the new director revised the scope of work and implemented new activities within the remaining ten months of the grant cycle to meet grant requirements and project goals.

At the beginning of the grant cycle, one of the four colleges that initially expressed interest in participating in the project, Sacramento City College, decided not to engage in the work. Project leadership engaged in conversations with college leaders to understand the decision and to keep the door open for future collaboration. The impact of the college's withdrawal is that the curriculum will not be implemented at all Los Rios District colleges.

Slow-moving bureaucratic steps and outdated systems resulted in both minor and major delays over the course of the project. Partners explained that getting required approvals at each step of the project's implementation was cumbersome and time-consuming. The new director spent significant time identifying staff with approval power and explaining the project to each person. Systems that required wet signatures, instead of using a more efficient signature process such as DocuSign, further delayed progress on needed contracts or agreements to codify partnerships and work.

An important part of implementing the curriculum according to ACE principles was to ensure that a counselor was in place to support the students in the BIP pathway. Due to union rules, hiring a counselor to matriculate existing students into the program and to provide them support was delayed.

The project timeline and scope were ultimately adjusted due to various curriculum-related delays. For example, the new project director identified a marketing firm to create an outreach plan and materials. However, delays in obtaining approval to contract with the firm made it impractical to proceed with hiring them. As a result, the partners agreed to develop their own marketing materials and collateral to support the project's outreach efforts.

Employer Engagement Challenges

Employer engagement activities faced challenges during the project, which was initially conceived during and just after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Early in the project, challenges included contending with busy schedules and limitations on employer partners' time; competing or differing interests; and encountering public sector

regulations that constrained innovation or change efforts (e.g., codified hiring platforms that limited flexibility to try new systems for a pilot; administrative red tape).

Employer engagement challenges that occurred later in grant efforts included bureaucratic procedures in establishing formalized agreements, and challenges sustaining engagement over time (e.g., keeping engagement interesting and relevant for the regional advisory board over the duration of the grant).

Despite these challenges, project partners explained that the pandemic created a window of opportunity to explore how education and industry partners could work together to innovate and to shift student training and learning.

Curriculum Development Challenges

Although the process of co-developing the BIP curriculum was successful, there were some challenges that the project's Core Group had to overcome. These challenges included garnering faculty buy-in for curriculum revisions, navigating technology constraints, and strategizing a way to cross-list courses in the district's course catalog.

The faculty curriculum leads from each college worked with their college-level curriculum committee to discuss proposed curriculum revisions. Some faculty on these college-level teams felt strong ownership of their courses and were resistant to engaging in discussions about curriculum change in general. These faculty were especially concerned about the idea of creating a shared curriculum with other colleges. This meant that the project Core and Curriculum Groups had to temper some of their colleagues' resistance to change and negotiate buy-in for curriculum creation and course content development.

In addition to challenges in developing course content, the Core and Curriculum Groups faced technological constraints. Each campus had different technology platforms and course naming conventions. To overcome this challenge, the teams agreed on naming conventions and supported one another to overcome leadership, institutional, or policy barriers. For example, one campus did not have the same departmental structure as the others, resulting in delays in getting the courses added to their catalog. Further, the district's course catalog system did not allow the courses to be cross listed in each colleges' catalog. To compensate for this limitation, the project's Curriculum Group had to indicate cross-listing in the "notes" section of the system's course description. This strategy allowed the group to indicate its catalog needs for administration. However, there is a possibility that notes that are visible in the system may not be clearly understood by students or counselors. This may result in students or counselors not understanding that courses taken at any of the three participating colleges are transferable among the colleges, which is one of the main benefits of having a shared curriculum.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations

The project's Core Group and WestEd have identified the following twelve lessons learned and recommendations, based on project staff experiences with project implementation, successes, and challenges.

Develop a Feasible Project Design

When the Core Group designed the project, it did not have a complete understanding of the barriers that the project would face, particularly in getting the curriculum designed and approved. To create a solid foundation for the project, it was essential that the project team designed a realistic scope of work that would be achievable within the grant's timeline and that would align with grant expectations. Although the team set clear, measurable goals, it underestimated the time needed to get the curriculum approved and included in the course catalogs at each college. The key partners were not engaged at the project development stage which would have strengthened the design. They were, however, engaged when the grant began, which ensured that they had a vested interest in the project's goals, strengthened their commitment, and facilitated a smoother execution process.

Ensure that the Grant Is Carefully Managed

Project leadership and the Core Group learned that managing a grant of this scale requires attention to detail, proactive planning, and consistent oversight. When the grant leadership changed near the end of the grant cycle, the project team learned that they did not clearly understand some of the project requirements. They subsequently learned that having access to and thoroughly reading and understanding the grant manual provides a foundation for closely monitoring timelines, deadlines, and deliverables to ensure that the project remains on track.

Selecting a dedicated project leader who can oversee these details and who will stay in their position for the entire grant cycle is vital, as this stability promotes continuity. However, it is equally important to have multiple individuals who are knowledgeable about the grant, to provide backup if needed. Successful grant management also entails timely and transparent reporting, sharing all activities and outcomes with the project team, and reaching out to experienced peers for guidance as needed. Establishing clear roles for partners ensures that everyone understands their responsibilities, which fosters accountability and smooth collaboration.

Establish and Codify Clear Partnership Roles and Expectations

Project leadership identified all partners and informally outlined their roles and expectations. However, the partnerships were not codified through MOUs or other formal agreements, contrary to a contract requirement. Establishing and codifying these roles at the project's outset would have ensured that each partner had a clear understanding of their responsibilities

and expectations, and created a reliable framework that would endure even if a partner representative leaves their position.

Prepare for and Manage Potential Project Changes While Remaining Committed to Project Goals

The project team learned that change is inevitable in large projects, particularly when faced with challenges such as the delays in getting the curriculum approved in a timely fashion. The team recommends that similar teams be prepared to adapt to shifts in the scope of work and recognize that even well-intentioned plans can face unforeseen obstacles. One partner suggested that, when changes arise, they should be approached in the way that the team approached the project director change: as an opportunity to realign with project goals and adapt strategies as needed while keeping the overarching objectives in focus. Another partner explained that this required the team to continually reflect on the "why" behind the work and to prioritize the goals that served students' best interests.

Prepare for and Manage Potential Leadership and Staff Changes

Leadership and staffing changes are common in long-term projects, as the project team learned firsthand through shifts in Project Leadership and in ILG leadership. Although building a collaborative culture can foster a resilience that can endure through such transitions, one partner explained that engaging multiple representatives from each partner helps to distribute knowledge and responsibility, and to minimize the impact of staff turnover. The team also emphasized the importance of establishing succession planning for key roles to ensure ongoing commitment from all partners.

Establish and Maintain Effective Communication

The partners emphasized the critical importance of developing communication strategies to ensure effective collaboration and project implementation. During the initial years of the grant, the project team was unaware of some project details, leading to missed opportunities and deadlines. Team members reported a dramatic positive shift under the new project director, heightening their awareness of the importance of communication for project success. They stressed the value of having a shared understanding, creating transparent processes, and sharing information. Project partners recommend the following promising strategies to establish and maintain effective communication:

5. **Foster a Shared Understanding of Project Goals, Activities, and Timelines**
   Partners learned that collaboration was stronger when the partners had a shared understanding of the project's goals, timeline, and activities. Establishing this clarity from the outset, they explained, helps all team members and partners stay aligned, reduces misunderstanding, and promotes a unified approach to the project's objectives.

6. **Establish Ongoing Communication Processes and Tools**
   Regular communication processes, including regularly scheduled updates and check-ins, kept the project team informed and engaged. Information, one partner explained, "needs to trickle down to the team." Providing shared tools through which partners had access to project documents was another way to share project information. The Curriculum Group used Google Docs that served as a hub for action items, departmental approvals, and critical resources. Communication improved through regularly scheduled meetings and shared files.

Understand Partners' Cultures and Structures

As described in the literature on cross-sector and education partnerships, designing and implementing collaborative ventures requires that the complexities and challenges found within partners' different contexts is acknowledged (Bryson et al., 2015; Asera et al., 2017; REL West, 2017). Project partners echoed this sentiment and underscored the importance of considering partners' varied ecosystems and constraints.

Although the three community colleges are part of the same district, they have different department structures and approval processes. The extents to which faculty in each college were open to curriculum change also varied by college. Getting buy-in, engagement, and approval at each campus required understanding the political and cultural realities of the college and the department. One partner explained the need to "consider and navigate institutional partners' different positions/roles, constraints, and departmental priorities."

It was equally important for the project partners to be aware of the broader ecosystem of public sector employers. These employers had limited availability to engage with the project and came to the table with different interests, priorities, and regulations that could create barriers to innovation (e.g., codified hiring platforms, administrative red tape). While participating campuses had relationships with various employers, the project also leveraged the deep knowledge of Valley Vision, a workforce partner, to help navigate the ecosystem by serving as the employer liaison. With its deep connections to public sector employers in the region, Valley Vision ensured that the most relevant partners were included in the RAB meetings and were invited to provide insight and feedback on the BIP curriculum.

Elicit Feedback from Employer Partners

To successfully align education and employment, the grant partners invited insight and feedback from public sector partners. Active employer participation and feedback helped them develop relevant curriculum that aligned with workforce needs. Effective employer engagement practices included offering multiple entry points for employer engagement and directly asking employers how they would like to participate. This approach ensured that employers' time and input were valued and fostered a sense of project ownership and

accountability. "When we did the outreach for the [RAB] meeting," one partner explained, "we were careful that [we were not] including folks that might feel like it was a waste of their time."

Leverage Partners Strategically

Project leadership, the Core Group, and the Curriculum Group were strategic about including partners in grant activities. Throughout the course of the project, they engaged partners with relevant connections and expertise, such as to identify efficient communication routes to leaders with decision-making power at the colleges and the district, to provide insight into workforce needs, and to deliver feedback on draft curriculum.

When the new curriculum was moving through the approval process, the project's Curriculum Group agreed to have Folsom Lake College usher the new curriculum through the approval process, recognizing that the smaller campus would face fewer reviews and requirements than the larger campuses, and that after the first college adopted the curriculum, getting approvals for the other campuses would be easier.

When initially exploring how to identify employers and sustain their engagement with project activities, the team decided to leverage Valley Vision's expertise. Due to its deep connections to industry and employers, Valley Vision coordinated engagement with the partners who were instrumental in ensuring the project's strong connection between education and the workforce.

Create Collaborative Teams

The successes of the project showed that it is possible for faculty to successfully collaborate within and across colleges to understand students' academic needs and employers' workforce needs and to develop a shared curriculum. The partners reported that the intra-college competition that they have experienced in the past gave way to a shared vision for the students and to effective collaboration. One Curriculum Group member reported that the project was, "breaking barriers and demonstrating that it can be done." Several partners explained that the culture of collaboration was due to a shared commitment to the project goals, positive and consistent Core Group and Curriculum Group membership, clear communication, and regularly scheduled meetings.

Change Systems Through Advocacy, Flexibility, and Persistence

The project partners made changes to the college and district systems by collaboratively developing a shared BIP curriculum across three colleges and improving student opportunities and a pathway to public sector jobs. Discussions with the Core Group and the Curriculum Group uncovered two key practices that enabled them to overcome challenges to reach their goals: collective advocacy, and flexibility and persistence to respond to challenges, manage discoveries, and see change as an opportunity.

1. **Collective Advocacy**

   Evidence from complex education partnerships (e.g., intersegmental and cross-sector partnerships) underscores the centrality of advocacy in propelling collaboration, projects, and ushering change efforts. Partners who advocate for project efforts can build and solidify common agendas, foster footing to align work and collaboration, and establish champions for students' academic, career, and life success (Asera et al., 2017; REL West, 2017).

   Advocacy has been a central part of the project's activities. The project partners collaboratively advocated for gaining and retaining external partner buy-in for the project and departmental acceptance for curriculum changes. For example, when the leader of the ILG left the organization at the beginning of the grant cycle, the remaining partners successfully worked together to advocate for continued ILG commitment by holding conversations with partners and remaining committed to the project goals.

2. **Flexibility and Persistence**

   Implementing the project to create systems change required flexibility and persistence as the project team progressed along its curriculum development and employer engagement journey. The team persisted when confronting delays and despite the challenges it faced, and by maintaining commitment to its core objectives, the Core Group adjusted its plans as needed when it faced barriers to progress. For example, getting approvals for the new curriculum involved more last-minute challenges than anticipated. The group navigated those challenges and strategized how to best manage approval processes. Other challenges that required flexible thinking and planning included negotiating different departmental structures, course content, course names, and technology platforms across campuses. Further, employer engagement plans for aligning a hiring platform were unsuccessful because the partners could not agree on the technology. One Core Group member noted that tackling unanticipated challenges was ultimately "rewarding" because it expanded the team's capacity for "digging [into] the challenges" as a group that can "engage in discovery together."

Expand and Leverage a Culture of Innovation and Collaboration

The partners were proud that they successfully collaborated to develop the BIP pathway and curriculum. They reported feeling comforted in the knowledge that partners in the community college system and in the broader community wanted to improve students' opportunities, and they emphasized the importance of finding creative ways to maintain partner engagement and enjoy the change process. As one partner noted, "Since we could do this, we can potentially do this with another program. Now we have evidence that we can collaborate."

Conclusion and Limitations

> *"This is flipping our programs, particularly our CTE programs, on their heads in terms of the types of support that [students are] going to be getting and the tracking that we can do. …It just really opens tons of doors for students."*
>
> *Project Leader and Core Group Member*

Los Rios Community College District (Los Rios District)'s *Crosswalking Business Pathways to Public Sector Careers* project was part of the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)'s first cohort of Strengthening Community College Training (SCC) grantees. As a consortium effort, the project aimed to build institutional capacity and systems change for Business Information Professional (BIP) academic programming and career training in the Sacramento area. Originally, all four community colleges in the district planned to work together to develop curriculum for all campuses that align industry needs and interests, but one college withdrew from the project. Nevertheless, the remaining three colleges (American River College, Cosumnes River College, and Folsom Lake College) collaborated to develop a BIP pathway with stacked credentials and that creates opportunities for access and advancement to public sector jobs for local and regional adult learners.

Alongside the consortium of community colleges, a key regional intermediary partner, Valley Vision, supported employer engagement activities. Valley Vision elicited industry collaboration, input, feedback, and approvals for the newly created BIP curriculum. Employer engagement partners met biannually as part of a regional advisory board (RAB) that was initiated and ultimately codified. The primary employer partners in the RAB were the Institute for Local Government, the Capital Adult Education Regional Consortium, and the Sacramento Employment and Training Agency.

During the project, employers indicated that their most significant unmet employee need was interpersonal skills and abilities that influence how workers interact with one another (soft

skills). In response, the project leaders secured subscriptions with several vendors that complement the BIP curriculum with training and certification in these soft skills. These vendors include LinkedIn Premier (including LinkedIn Learning), the International Association of Administrative Professionals, the American Management Association, Skillsoft Career Training, the Association of Administrative Professionals and Executive Assistants Professional Administrative Certification of Excellence Certification, Certiport, and Heroes VR.

Four overarching evaluation questions guided WestEd's evaluation of the project:

1. To what extent has the project increased levels and types of employer engagement and support for pathways, student employment, retention, and advancement of career pathway participants?
2. How was the SCC project able to enhance career pathways programming and accelerated learning strategies for adult learners?
3. To what extent did the project improve alignment and integration with regional workforce partners and streamline or expand services for career pathway participants?
4. To what extent did the project improve access to robust work-based learning opportunities to facilitate the success of participants in career pathways?

Findings for each evaluation question are detailed in the *Findings* section of this report. A summary overview of the findings follows:

5. To what extent has the project increased levels and types of employer engagement and support for pathways, student employment, retention, and advancement of career pathway participants?
    - Employers were engaged with the project through the RAB.
    - A strategy for employer engagement and internship opportunities was developed.
    - A formal process for input on curriculum was established.
    - The demand for BIP programming was documented.
    - An analysis of regional public sector employers was completed.
    - Internship opportunities for BIP students were identified.
    - Public sector recruitment and hiring policies/practices were modified.
6. How was the SCC project able to enhance career pathways programming and accelerated learning strategies for adult learners?
    - A new BIP stacked certificate program was (re)designed for board review and approval.
    - The BIP curriculum with principles of Adaptability, Connection, and Equity from the Accelerated College Education (ACE) model was adopted with flexible sections and scheduling.

- Students were enrolled in the BUSTEC/BIP pathway, but cohort enrollment was pending.
- Faculty training in online course design/delivery occurred, with future training planned.
- BIP online courses were submitted to the local peer online review process.

7. To what extent did the project improve alignment and integration with regional workforce partners and streamline or expand services for career pathway participants?

- Mechanisms were established to elicit RAB review, input, and approval for the BIP curriculum.
- The curriculum for two new stackable certificates (BIP I and BIP II) and one new A.S. degree (Business Information Technology) was developed and cataloged.
- Plans for online BIP delivery through the LRCO portal were discontinued.
- Partnerships were conceived to provide online student opportunities such as badging.
- The number of students who took exams for Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) certifications increased in 2021 from 2024.
- Plans for marketing and branding the BIP program are still in process.
- Measuring marketing outcomes for program awareness is slated for the future.
- Processes for student referrals and support services were assessed and reporting processes were redesigned.
- Processes for student referrals and reporting were extended to include online BIP training incorporating LinkedIn Premier.
- CAERC adult education courses were aligned with the BIP pathway.
- New partnership with LinkedIn helped to inform strategies for student- and industry-aligned training and career opportunities and analysis of demand for MOS certification.

8. To what extent did the project improve access to robust work-based learning opportunities to facilitate the success of participants in career pathways?

- BIP curriculum that incorporates ACE principles was designed.
- Opt-out scheduling and sequential course enrollment were implemented.
- Proactive advising programs were designed.
- User experience improvements were not integrated into the infrastructure of the Los Rios College online portal.
- BIP participants will be provided with materials, programming, and laptops and will be continuously evaluated.

- The BIP pathway incorporating the ACE model was delivered.
- BIP students have access to information on internships with public sector employers.
- Career events will be offered to BIP students.

Conclusion

As the project's third-party evaluator, WestEd conducted a descriptive study using a phased evaluation approach (development, formative, and outcome) and employing quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The evaluation team helped to refine the logic model for the project, observed meetings and reviewed key documents, and interviewed the core, employer engagement, and curriculum development partners to capture their perspectives on implementation successes, challenges, lessons learned, and recommendations. The findings from this evaluation indicate that the partners cultivated cross-campus collaboration, aligned education and workforce aims to develop new BIP curriculum, and cultivated employer engagement. The project partners

- engaged with public sector employers to understand the skills needed in the workforce, incorporate employer insight and feedback into the new BIP curriculum, and develop a list of internships for BIP students;
- cultivated cross-institutional collaboration and created a foundation for a culture of collaboration among partnering community colleges in the district;
- leveraged partnerships, cross-agency alignment, and strengths to create new BIP curriculum, including two certificates and one A.S. degree incorporating the ACE model; and
- designed proactive advising programs for BIP students and incorporated opt-out scheduling and sequential enrollment to maximize course availability

The project team members also reported that they were persistent when faced with barriers; collaborated, instead of competing, across campuses; navigated leadership transitions; developed and maintained strong management and communication systems, particularly during the final grant year; and confirmed their ability to collaborate effectively on future endeavors.

Limitations

The project involved various unique layers of partnerships, activities, and complexities for implementation and evaluation. Thus, the information and evaluation findings offered in this report are limited to the project and are not intended to be generalizable. Instead, they inform

an understanding of the successes, challenges, and lessons learned from the project's efforts and implementation.

The evaluation captured learning about project efforts for employer engagement, curriculum development, collaboration, and alignment of cross-institutional education and employer needs. Despite the project team's successful collaboration in developing the new and enhanced BIP curriculum, student cohort enrollment was delayed. Despite these challenges, the project successfully aligned and developed the BIP curriculum to include two stacked certificates and an A.S. degree. Operational processes were established to ensure that the curriculum reflected current industry needs and alignment across participating colleges. Moreover, challenges and delays led to new strategies, such as establishing new partners that could provide subscription-based services for ongoing student opportunities related to job training and careers.

Next Steps and Plans for Sustainability

Though there is still work to fully reach remaining project aims, the *Crosswalking Business Pathways to Public Sector Careers* project realized multiple achievements. The project team developed a new and shared curriculum to prepare career pathway participants for public sector careers. The team also established processes to update and track the curriculum to serve students; created a culture of collaboration across campuses and among participating faculty; and expanded partnerships to provide more robust opportunities for students to develop relevant industry skills and certificates for BIP training and career access.

Project partners plan to continue with their efforts after the DOL grant funding ends. Next steps for the project include branding the BIP curriculum and launching a marketing campaign, hiring a dedicated full-time staff member for program oversight, continuing cross-institutional collaboration for curriculum updates and refinements, and enrolling cohorts of BIP students.

Project leadership, the Core Group, and the Curriculum Group underscored that these next steps will help the BIP pathway to be sustainable. Finalizing and launching BIP pathway branding and marketing will grow student awareness and outreach for programming. Having a dedicated full-time staff position will provide program oversight to manage and ensure capacity and continuity for programming. Continued collaboration will support curriculum alignment across the district's colleges. For example, partners have established processes for open communication and frequent meetings, leading to expectations that colleges maintain transparency and engagement in the shared curriculum.

Recently created partnerships for subscription services and program support are also expected to build sustainable career readiness and opportunities for students. For example, through LinkedIn Learning, BIP students will be able to access continued online training for upskilling and to maintain marketability. The LinkedIn subscription services will also allow college partners to track BIP students into employment, through analytics that the platform will

provide. This, in turn, will allow the colleges to better follow students' education-to-career trajectories, and to tap into alumni and employers to further inform continuous improvement and relevance of the program.

Finally, the group established a Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) in November 2024. The RAC was developed to provide the BIP program with guidance, support, and recommendations to ensure alignment with current industry standards and trends, enhance students' educational experiences, and prepare them for business information sector careers.

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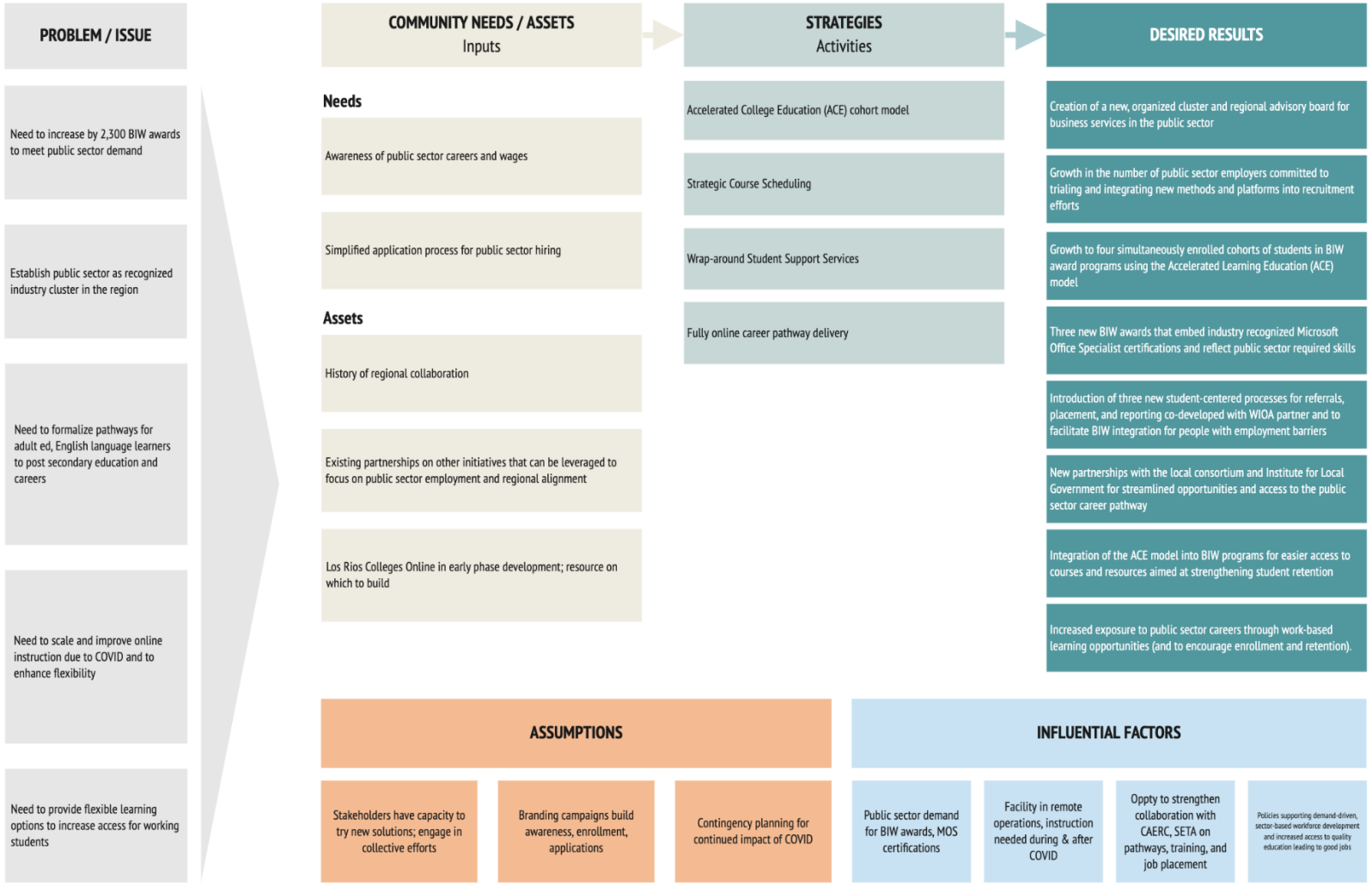
Appendix A. Logic Model

During the first months of the project, WestEd collaborated with the project team to revise the logic model to provide a roadmap for operationalizing the work to align with the proposed theory of change. In March 2022, the evaluation team collaborated with the project director at the time to identify and clarify the relationships among the project inputs, outputs, and outcomes. The project team also ensured that the conceptual underpinning of the project was clearly and coherently expressed in visual form, leading with the desired results and emphasizing systems change performance outcomes and targets.

The project's initial and revised logic models are provided in Figures A1 and A2, respectively. Following each figure is a bulleted list summarizing the text under each category of the logic model graphic.

Figure A1. Logic Model (Proposal Version)



Note: A fully accessible text version of the figure is available on the following pages.

Logic Model (Proposal Version)

Problem / Issue

- Need to increase by 2,300 BIW awards to meet public sector demand
- Establish public sector as recognized industry cluster in the region
- Need to formalize pathways for adult ed, English language learners to postsecondary education and careers
- Need to scale and improve online instruction due to COVID and to enhance flexibility
- Need to provide flexible learning options to increase access for working students

Community Needs / Assets (Inputs)

Needs

- Awareness of public sector careers and wages
- Simplified application process for public sector hiring

Assets

- History of regional collaboration
- Existing partnerships on other initiatives that can be leveraged to focus on public sector employment and regional alignment
- Los Rios Colleges Online (LRCO) in early phase development; resource on which to build

Strategies (Activities)

- Accelerated College Education (ACE) cohort model
- Strategic Course Scheduling
- Wrap-around Student Support Services
- Fully online career pathways delivery

Desired Results

- Creation of a new, organized cluster and regional advisory board for business services in the public sector

- Growth in the number of public sector employers committed to trialing and integrating new methods and platforms into recruitment efforts
- Growth to four simultaneously enrolled cohorts of students in BIW award programs using principles from the Accelerated Learning Education (ACE) model
- Three new BIW awards that embed industry recognized Microsoft Office Specialist certifications and reflect public sector required skills
- Introduction of three new student-centered processes for referrals, placement, and reporting co-developed with SETA (WIOA partner) and to facilitate BIW integration for people with employment barriers
- New partnerships with the local consortium and Institute for Local Government for streamlined opportunities and access to the public sector career pathway
- Integration of ACE principles into BIW programs for easier access to courses and resources aimed at strengthening student retention
- Increased exposure to public sector careers through work-based learning opportunities (and to encourage enrollment and retention)

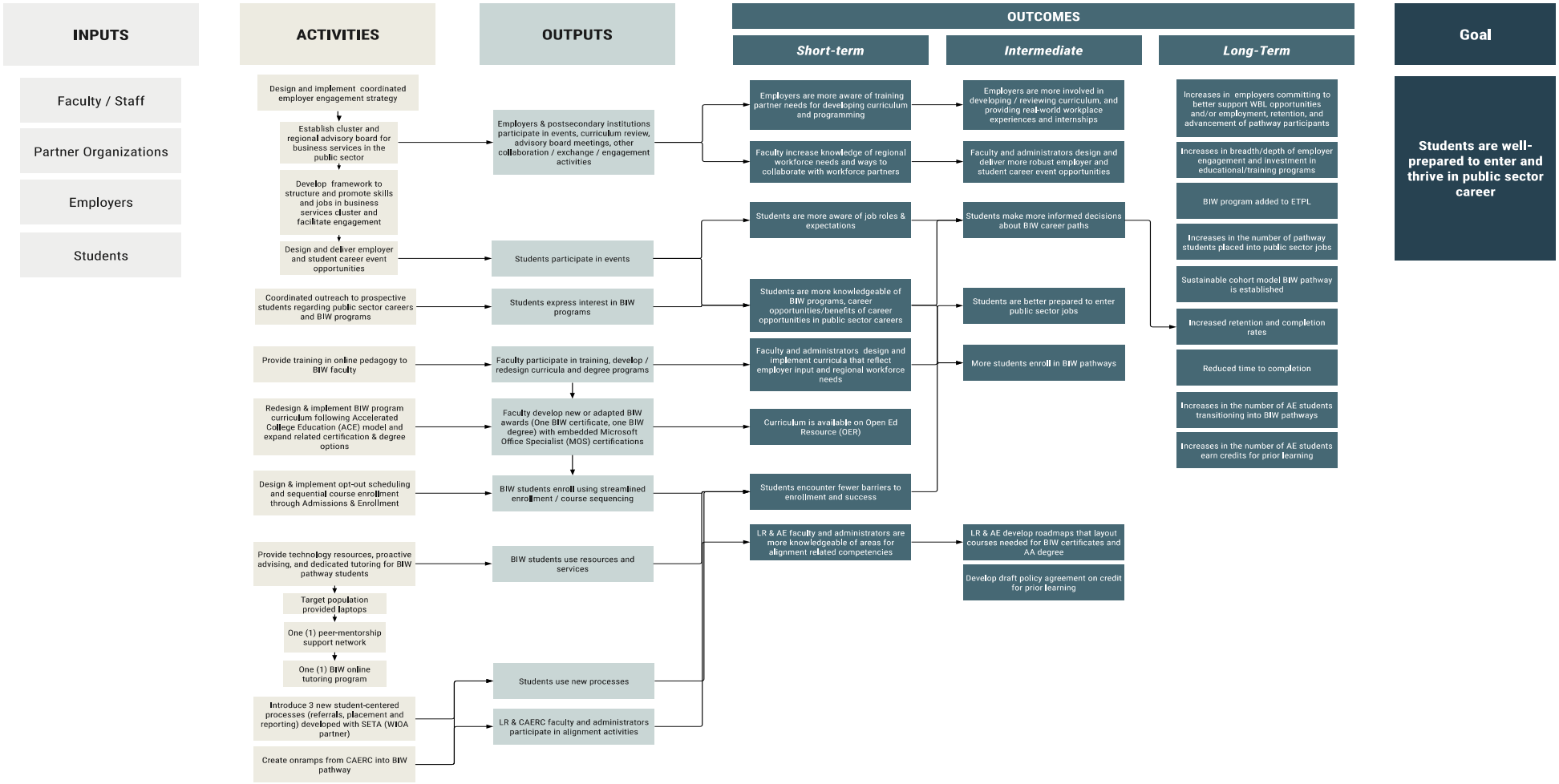
Assumptions

- Interest holders have capacity to try new solutions; engage in collective efforts
- Branding campaigns build awareness, enrollment, applications
- Contingency planning for continued impact of COVID

Influential Factors

- Public sector demand for BIW awards, MOS certifications
- Facility in remote operations, instruction needed during and after COVID
- Opportunity to strengthen collaboration with CAERC, SETA on pathways, training, and job placement
- Policies supporting demand-driven, sector-based workforce development and increased access to quality education leading to good jobs

Figure A2. Logic Model (Revised Version)



Note: A fully accessible text version of the figure is available on the following pages.

Logic Model (Revised Version)

Goal

- Students are well-prepared to enter and thrive in public sector career

Inputs

- Faculty / Staff
- Partner Organizations
- Employers
- Students

Activities, Outputs, Short-Term Outcomes, and Intermediate Outcomes

- **Activity**: Design and implement coordinated employer engagement strategy
- **Activity**: Establish cluster and regional advisory board for business services in the public sector
    - **Output**: Employers and postsecondary institutions participate in events, curriculum review, advisory board meetings, other collaboration / exchange / engagement activities
        - **Short-term outcome**: Employers are more aware of training partner needs for developing curriculum and programming
        - **Intermediate outcome**: Employers are more involved in developing / reviewing curriculum, and providing real-world workplace experiences and internships
        - **Short-term outcome**: Faculty increase knowledge of regional workforce needs and ways to collaborate with workforce partners
            - **Intermediate outcome:** Faculty and administrators design and deliver more robust employer and student career event opportunities
- **Activity**: Develop framework to structure and promote skills and jobs in business services cluster and facilitate engagement
- **Activity**: Design and deliver employer and student career event opportunities
    - **Output**: Students participate in events

- **Short-term outcome:** Students are more aware of job roles and expectations
    - **Intermediate outcome**: Students make more informed decisions about BIW career paths
    - **Intermediate outcome**: Students are better prepared to enter public sector jobs
- **Intermediate outcome**: More students enroll in the BIW pathway
- **Short-term outcome:** Students are more knowledgeable of BIW programs, career opportunities/benefits of career opportunities in public sector careers
    - **Intermediate outcome**: Students make more informed decisions about BIW career paths
    - **Intermediate outcome**: Students are better prepared to enter public sector jobs
- **Intermediate outcome**: More students enroll in the BIW pathway

9. **Activity**: Coordinated outreach to prospective students regarding public sector careers and BIW programs
    a. **Output**: Students express interest in BIW programs
        i. **Short-term outcome:** Students are more aware of job roles and expectations
            1. **Intermediate outcome**: Students make more informed decisions about BIW career paths
            2. **Intermediate outcome**: Students are better prepared to enter public sector jobs
        ii. **Intermediate outcome**: More students enroll in the BIW pathway
        iii. **Short-term outcome:** Students are more knowledgeable of BIW programs, career opportunities/benefits of career opportunities in public sector careers
            1. **Intermediate outcome**: Students make more informed decisions about BIW career paths
            2. **Intermediate outcome**: Students are better prepared to enter public sector jobs
        iv. **Intermediate outcome**: More students enroll in the BIW pathway
10. **Activity**: Provide training in online pedagogy to BIW faculty

a. **Output**: Faculty participate in training, develop / redesign curriculum and degree programs
    i. **Short-term outcome**: Faculty and administrators design and implement curriculum that reflect employer input and regional workforce needs
        1. **Intermediate outcome**: Students make more informed decisions about BIW career paths
        2. **Intermediate outcome**: Students are better prepared to enter public sector jobs
    ii. **Intermediate outcome**: More students enroll in the BIW pathway

11. Activity: Redesign & implement BIW curriculum incorporating Accelerated College Education (ACE) principles and expand related certification & degree options

a. **Output:** Faculty develop new or adapted BIW awards (One BIW certificate, one BIW degree) with embedded Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) certifications
    i. **Short-term outcome:** Curriculum is available on Open Ed Resource (OER)

12. Activity: Design & implement opt-out scheduling and sequential course enrollment through Admissions & Enrollment

a. **Output:** BIW students enroll using streamlined enrollment / course sequencing
    i. **Short-term outcome:** Students encounter fewer barriers to enrollment and success
        1. **Intermediate outcome**: Students make more informed decisions about BIW career paths
        2. **Intermediate outcome**: Students are better prepared to enter public sector jobs
    ii. **Intermediate outcome**: More students enroll in the BIW pathway
    iii. **Short-term outcome:** LR & AE faculty and administrators are more knowledgeable of areas for alignment related competencies
        1. **Intermediate outcome**: LR & AE develop roadmaps that lay out courses needed for BIW certificates and AA degree
        2. **Intermediate outcome**: Develop draft policy agreement on credit for prior learning

13. Activity: Provide technology resources, proactive advising, and dedicated tutoring for the BIW pathway students

a. **Activity:** Target population provided laptops
b. **Activity:** One (1) peer-mentorship support network

c. **Activity:** One (1) BIW online tutoring program

   i. **Output:** BIW students use resources and services

      1. **Short-term outcome:** Students encounter fewer barriers to enrollment and success

         a. **Intermediate outcome**: Students make more informed decisions about BIW career paths

         b. **Intermediate outcome**: Students are better prepared to enter public sector jobs

   ii. **Intermediate outcome**: More students enroll in the BIW pathway

      1. **Short-term outcome:** LR & AE faculty and administrators are more knowledgeable of areas for alignment related competencies

         a. **Intermediate outcome**: LR & AE develop roadmaps that lay out courses needed for BIW certificates and AA degree

         b. **Intermediate outcome**: Develop draft policy agreement on credit for prior learning.

14. **Activity:** Introduce 3 new student-centered processes (referrals, placement and reporting) developed with SETA (WIOA partner)

a. **Output:** Students use new processes

   i. **Short-term outcome:** Students encounter fewer barriers to enrollment and success

      1. **Intermediate outcome**: Students make more informed decisions about BIW career paths

      2. **Intermediate outcome**: Students are better prepared to enter public sector jobs

   ii. **Intermediate outcome**: More students enroll in the BIW pathway

   iii. **Short-term outcome:** LR & AE faculty and administrators are more knowledgeable of areas for alignment related competencies

      1. **Intermediate outcome**: LR & AE develop roadmaps that lay out courses needed for BIW certificates and AA degree

      2. **Intermediate outcome**: Develop draft policy agreement on credit for prior learning

b. **Output:** LR & CAERC faculty and administrators participate in alignment activities

   i. **Short-term outcome:** Students encounter fewer barriers to enrollment and success

1. **Intermediate outcome**: Students make more informed decisions about BIW career paths
2. **Intermediate outcome**: Students are better prepared to enter public sector jobs

ii. **Intermediate outcome**: More students enroll in the BIW pathway

iii. **Short-term outcome:** LR & AE faculty and administrators are more knowledgeable of areas for alignment related competencies

1. **Intermediate outcome**: LR & AE develop roadmaps that lay out courses needed for BIW certificates and AA degree
2. **Intermediate outcome**: Develop draft policy agreement on credit for prior learning

15. Activity: Create on-ramps from CAERC into the BIW pathway

a. **Output:** Students use new processes

i. **Short-term outcome:** Students encounter fewer barriers to enrollment and success

1. **Intermediate outcome**: Students make more informed decisions about BIW career paths
2. **Intermediate outcome**: Students are better prepared to enter public sector jobs

ii. **Intermediate outcome**: More students enroll in the BIW pathway

iii. **Short-term outcome:** LR & AE faculty and administrators are more knowledgeable of areas for alignment related competencies

1. **Intermediate outcome**: LR & AE develop roadmaps that lay out courses needed for BIW certificates and AA degree
2. **Intermediate outcome**: Develop draft policy agreement on credit for prior learning

b. **Output:** LR & CAERC faculty and administrators participate in alignment activities

i. **Short-term outcome:** Students encounter fewer barriers to enrollment and success

1. **Intermediate outcome**: Students make more informed decisions about BIW career paths
2. **Intermediate outcome**: Students are better prepared to enter public sector jobs

ii. **Intermediate outcome**: More students enroll in the BIW pathway

iii. **Short-term outcome:** LR & AE faculty and administrators are more knowledgeable of areas for alignment related competencies

1. **Intermediate outcome**: LR & AE develop roadmaps that lay out courses needed for BIW certificates and AA degree
2. **Intermediate outcome**: Develop draft policy agreement on credit for prior learning

Long-Term Outcomes

16. **Long-term outcome:** Increases in employers committing to better support WBL opportunities and/or employment, retention, and advancement of pathway participants
17. **Long-term outcome:** Increases in breadth/depth of employer engagement and investment in educational/training programs
18. **Long-term outcome:** BIW program added to ETPL
19. **Long-term outcome:** Increases in the number of pathway students placed into public sector jobs
20. **Long-term outcome:** Sustainable cohort model BIW pathway is established
21. **Long-term outcome:** Increased retention and completion rates
22. **Long-term outcome:** Reduced time to completion
23. **Long-term outcome:** Increases in the number of AE students transitioning into the BIW pathway
24. **Long-term outcome:** Increases in the number of AE students earning credits for prior learning

Appendix B. Interview Protocol

The evaluation team conducted virtual focus groups during the first half of the evaluation and follow-up interviews during the latter part of the evaluation to document the experiences of key partners. These conversations engaged 17 individuals who participated in the project in various roles, including project leaders, faculty who designed the curriculum, and representatives from partner agencies.

The information gleaned from focus groups and interviews provided the evaluation team with an understanding of the processes, experiences, and perceptions of project outcomes. Participation in evaluation activities, including conversations, was voluntary, and information about the evaluation, intent, and opt-in and opt-out measures was shared with participants.

The following protocol guided the interviews conducted in fall 2024. The protocol used for focus groups was included in the interim report.

Interview Protocol—Fall 2024

Los Rios Community College District SCC Grant Project, Follow-Up (Phase II Group) Interview Protocol

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to participate in a follow-up interview on your experiences with the Los Rios Community College District's SCC Grant Project – *Crosswalking Business Pathways to Public Sector Careers*. As you know, WestEd is conducting an evaluation to document project phases, implementation, and experiences, and to capture key lessons learned towards project aims.

The information you share will help us understand your efforts to collaborate in designing an enhanced pathway program for systems change. The conversation should take around 45 – 60 minutes and is voluntary. You can choose to skip a question if you do not wish to answer it.

We'd also like to ask your permission to record this conversation for note-taking purposes. Notes and recordings will be kept in an encrypted system and no recordings will be shared with external parties. Do we have your permission to record this discussion?

After the interviews, we will review transcripts and notes for themes. We will also respect confidentiality and won't use your names in any write-ups or reports.

Thank you again for your time.

We'd like to take a moment to ask if there are any questions? Please feel free to ask questions now or at any time during the interview.

I. Project Updates and Status

The first questions explore where you think the project is to date with its current phase of implementation and evolution towards project goals and objectives.

1. Can you please remind us of your key role and charge on the project? [Probe: which group(s) participant is involved in.]
    a. Has your role or charge changed since the beginning of the project? If so, how and in what ways?
2. What phase of the project would you say you are in to date?
    a. How would you describe the project's evolution?
3. Given the current state of the project, what would you say are the key project goals or objectives now?
    a. Have these goals changed from the project's initial aims? If yes, why and how have goals changed?
    b. How would you describe progress towards goals? For example, are you about where you anticipated you'd be towards projected plans and/or aims? Why or why not?
    c. What benchmarks have been met and which are left?

II. Processes and Collaboration

These next questions focus on the state of project processes and collaboration.

4. What processes do you feel have ensured progress toward project goals and objectives?
    a. How effectively do you feel processes have been implemented?
    b. Were any new processes developed since the beginning of the project? If yes, what processes and why?

c. What, if anything, could improve processes?

5. In what ways, if any, has collaboration shifted since the beginning of the project?
    a. What collaborations and/or partnerships have been codified?
    b. Have partnerships grown? [Probe: for new partnerships, collaboration, reasons for growth.]
    c. Were any partnerships lost? If yes, why? How did you deal with the loss?
6. What about your collaboration and/or collective work do you find has been most rewarding or effective?
    a. What has worked well (e.g., areas of success, beneficial practices, etc.)?
    b. What, if anything, might make your collaboration more effective? Why?

III. Successes, Outcomes, and Challenges

Thank you for sharing your experiences with the project at this stage of efforts. Now we'd like to learn about project successes that you have enjoyed and any challenges that you have faced.

7. What successes (wins) would you say the project has enjoyed at this point? [Probe: for successes for systems, faculty, students, and overall outcomes.]
    a. What made these successes possible?
    b. Do these successes align with anticipated outcomes? How do you know?
8. So far, what are some of the challenges or barriers you've encountered in the project? [Probe: on dimensions of planning and implementation, e.g., human, interpersonal, organizational, structural, policy, resources and materials, funding, etc.]
    a. What, if anything, helped you to overcome these challenges? [Probe: for supports, strategies, resources, etc.]

IV. Lessons Learned and Considerations

The last questions focus on the overall lessons, such as key takeaways, that you have learned from the life of the project and any considerations or recommendations that you may have.

9. What are your big takeaways (lessons learned) from your project experience overall?
    a. What are you most proud of accomplishing?
    b. Looking back, what might you have done differently?
10. What considerations or recommendations, if any, might you have for others engaged in similar work?

Conclusion

We've come to the end of the conversation. Thank you for taking the time to talk to us and for sharing your experiences. Before we end, do you have additional comments that you would like to share? Any questions to ask us? [Pause]

If there are no questions for now, please feel free to reach out to us later if you would like or need. You can best contact me by email at llefevr@wested.org. Thank you again for all your time!

Appendix C. Student Survey

The evaluation team developed a student survey that the colleges could use to elicit information from students currently enrolled in the BUSTEC/Business Information Professional (BIP) pathway. The survey instrument can be adapted for future use, and the data gathered can be analyzed over time to support program evaluation and improvement.

BUSTEC Student Survey

Purpose of This Survey

You are asked to complete this survey as part of a program evaluation conducted by WestEd, an educational research organization. This survey seeks to capture your perspectives and experiences in the BUSTEC program. The survey is part of a project intended to evaluate outcomes related to the Strengthening Community College (SCC) Training Grant, a federal grant in which your college participates. The results of this survey will help your college improve services and better design programs and classes leading to jobs in the public sector.

This survey is intended for students enrolled in BUSTEC pathway courses. All data will remain confidential and stored on secured storage available only to those working on the project. Results of the survey will be reported only in the aggregate (collectively). Your participation in this survey is strictly voluntary and you may end your participation at any time. Whether you choose to participate in the survey will not affect your grade in this class in any way.

This survey should take approximately 10 – 15 minutes to complete. If you agree to participate in this survey, please click **NEXT** to begin.

Section I. Education & Career Goals

What's your major or main program of study? (*Drop-down*)

In which of the following courses are you currently enrolled? (*Drop-down of current BUSTEC classes*) (1 pt)

What are your current career goals? (Select all that apply.) (3 pts)

- Get a job
- Get a better job
- Get a raise
- Change careers
- Advance in my current job
- I don't know
- Other

What are your long-term education goals? (Select all that apply.) (3 pts)

- Earn a certificate
- Earn an Associate's degree
- Earn a Bachelor's degree
- Earn a Master's or higher
- I don't know
- Other

To what extent have the following challenges or obstacles affected your ability to successfully achieve your educational goals? (*Likert-type, Not at all–To a great extent*) (14 pts)

- Cost of classes
- Cost of books and materials
- Degree or certificate requires too much time
- Not enough hybrid or online courses
- Access to internet or technology
- Classes are not scheduled when I can attend
- Lack of connection with faculty
- Difficulty getting to class / transportation
- Lack of family support
- Childcare needs
- Family / personal obligations
- Not applicable
- Other

Section II. BUSTEC Pathway Enrollment

How did you learn about the BUSTEC program? (Select all that apply.) (4 pts)

- Informational session
- Counselor recommendation
- Other students
- Faculty
- Course catalog
- Website
- Referral by someone outside the college
- Other

Why did you decide to enroll in the BUSTEC program? [Open ended or options with an open-ended other] (3 pts)

Which of the following influenced your decision to enroll in the BUSTEC program? (Select all that apply.) (5 pts)

- Opportunity to earn stackable certificates
- Interest in public sector jobs
- Experience in public sector jobs
- Work-based learning opportunities
- Opportunities to connect with potential employers
- Flexible scheduling
- Technology supports and resources
- Success in other classes in this program
- Integrated career guidance
- Not applicable
- Other

Section III. BUSTEC Pathway Experiences

How well do you feel your BUSTEC pathway courses are preparing you for jobs in the public sector (civil service, local government, non-profit organizations, etc.)? (*Not at all – Extremely well, I don't know, N/A*) (1 pt)

At this moment in time, how certain are you that you will complete a BUSTEC certificate? (*5-point Likert-type, Not at all – Extremely and I do not plan to complete a certificate*) (1 pt)

At this moment in time, how certain are you that you will complete a BUSTEC Associate's degree? (*5-point Likert-type, Not at all – Extremely and I do not plan to complete an Associate's degree*) (1 pt)

=> *If* **At this moment in time, how certain are you [. . .]** *is not Very or Extremely certain, then:*

> **You indicated in the previous question that you did not intend to pursue a BUSTEC certificate or degree. Can you share some of the reasons why?** (3 pts)

How satisfied are you with your experience in the BUSTEC pathway? (*Not at all satisfied – Extremely, N/A*) (1 pt)

=> *If* **How satisfied are you with your experience in the BUSTEC pathway?** *is ≤ neutral, then:*

> **You indicated in the previous question some dissatisfaction with your experience in the BUSTEC pathway. Can you share some of the reasons why?** (3 pts)

Based on your experience in the BUSTEC pathway, would you recommend it to friends or family members? (1 pt)

- Definitely, Yes
- Probably, Yes
- Probably, No
- Definitely, No
- Can't say

Section IV. Work-Based Learning and Employer Engagement

Were you provided with work-based learning opportunities during the program*? (Yes/No, I don't know)* (1 pts)

=> *If* **Were you provided with WBL [. . .]** *is Yes or I don't know:*

> **What kind of work-based learning activities did you participate in? (Select all that apply.)** (4 pts)

- In-class employer visit
- Workplace tour
- Job shadow
- Informational interview

- Mock interview
- Workplace simulations
- Mentorship
- Career fair
- Other

How valuable were the work-based learning opportunities you received? (*Not at all – Extremely, Not applicable*) (1 pt)

To what extent did the work-based learning opportunities you received help you reach your career goals? (*Not at all – To a great extent, Not applicable*) (1 pt)

How frequently did you engage with public sector employers as part of your experience in the BUSTEC program? *(Never – Often, Not applicable)* (1 pt)

=> *If* **How frequently did you engage with public sector employers** > *Never*:

What kinds of experiences did you have with public sector employers? (Select all that apply.) (4 pts)

- In-class visit
- Workplace tour
- Job shadow
- Informational interview
- Mock interview
- Workplace simulations
- Mentorship
- Career fair
- Other

Section V. Program Supports and Services

Did you benefit from any program support services at your college? (Yes/No) (1 pt)

=> *If* **Did you benefit from any support services** = *yes*:

What kinds of support services were you provided?

How valuable were the services or resources provided? (*Not at all to Extremely*) (1 pt)

Section VI. Additional Information and Feedback

Thank you for your responses and for sharing your experiences. We'd like to learn a little more information about you to help us understand additional background context and to ask you if you would be willing to talk to us again in the future.

What is your age group? (1 pt)

- 18 to 24
- 25 to 34
- 35 to 44
- 45 to 54
- 55 to 64
- 65 or over

What is your gender identity? (1 pt)

- Male (including transgender male)
- Female (including transgender female)
- Non-binary
- Gender not listed here (Please specify.)

Which race/ethnicity best describes you? (Please choose only one.) (1 pt)

- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- Black or African-American
- Hispanic or Latino
- White
- Multiethnic or Multiracial
- Race or ethnicity not represented here (Please specify.) (1 pt)

Which of the following categories best describes your employment status? (1 pt)

- Employed, working full-time
- Employed, working part-time
- Not employed, looking for work
- Not employed, NOT looking for work

- Retired
- Disabled, not able to work

=> *If* **Which of the following categories** = *Employed (full or part-time):*

Are you currently employed in the public sector? (Yes, No) (1 pt)

=> ***If*** **Which of the following categories** = *Not employed, looking for work:*

Are you looking for jobs in the public sector? (Yes, No) (1 pt)

Would you like to be considered for a group conversation about your experiences at your school?

- Yes
- No

=> *If* **Would you like to be considered for a group conversation** = *Yes:*

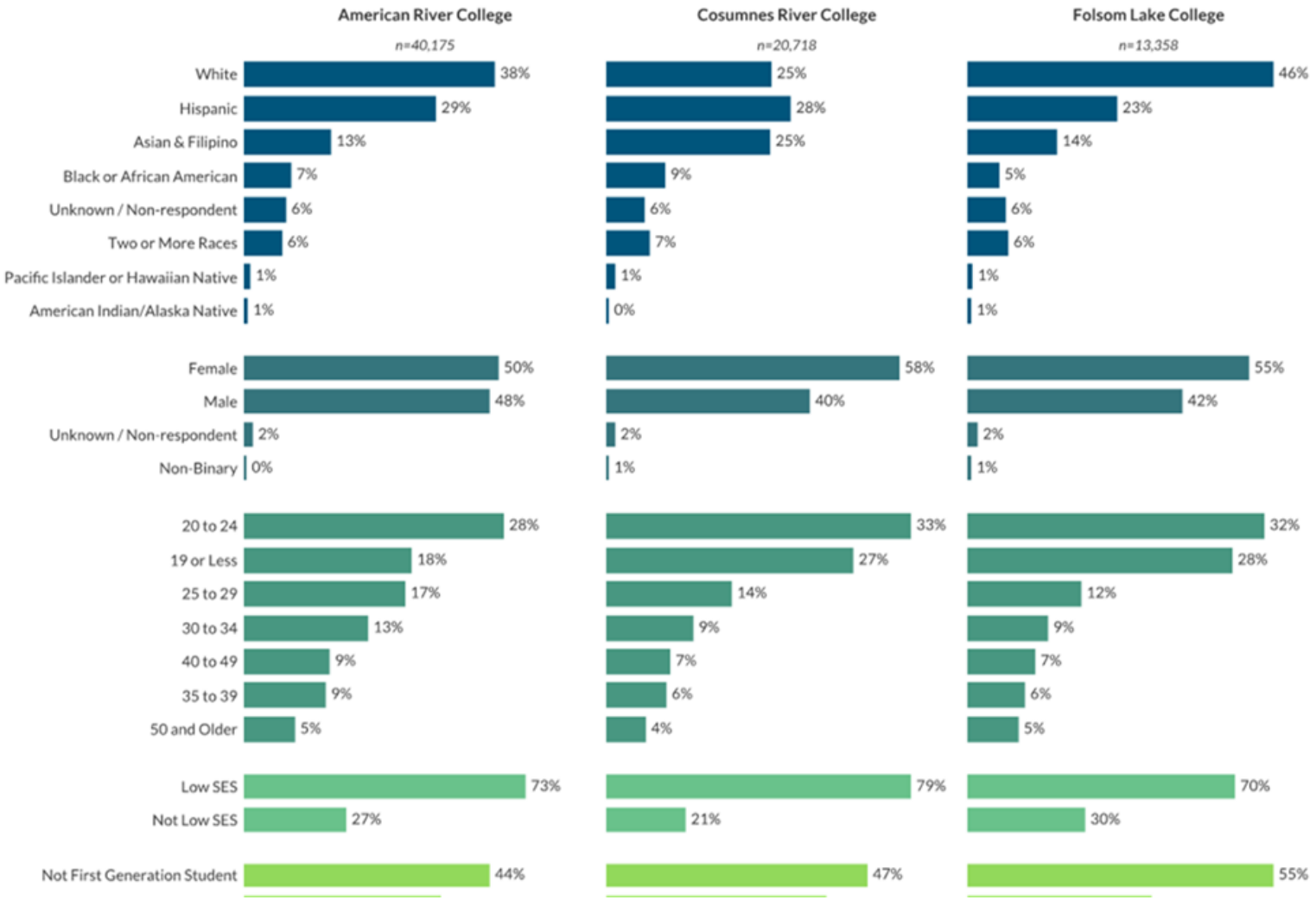
Please provide your contact information below:

- Name
- Email
- Phone

Appendix D. College Demographic Data

During the project design, all four community colleges in Los Rios District—American River College, Cosumnes River College, Folsom Lake College, and Sacramento City College—agreed to collaborate. Ultimately, Sacramento City College decided not to participate, but the three other colleges remained active partners throughout the contract. Figure D1 presents college demographic data for the three participating colleges and a fully accessible table of the data.

Figure D1. College Demographic Data (2021/22)



Note: Tables D1-D5 on the following pages present the data in this figure in an accessible text format.

Table D1. College Demographic Data (2021/22), Race/Ethnicity

Demographic	American River College (*n* = 40,175)	Cosumnes River College (*n* = 20,718)	Folsom Lake College (*n* = 13,358)
White	38%	25%	46%
Hispanic	29%	28%	23%
Asian & Filipino	13%	25%	14%
Black or African American	7%	9%	5%
Unknown / Non-respondent	6%	6%	6%
Two or More Races	6%	7%	6%
Pacific Islander or Hawaiian Native	1%	1%	1%
American Indian/Alaska Native	1%	0%	1%

Table D2. College Demographic Data (2021/22), Gender

Demographic	American River College (*n* = 40,175)	Cosumnes River College (*n* = 20,718)	Folsom Lake College (*n* = 13,358)
Female	50%	58%	55%
Male	48%	40%	42%
Unknown/Non-respondent	2%	2%	2%
Non-Binary	0%	1%	1%

Table D3. College Demographic Data (2021/22), Age

Demographic	American River College (*n* = 40,175)	Cosumnes River College (*n* = 20,718)	Folsom Lake College (*n* = 13,358)
20 to 24	28%	33%	32%
19 or Less	18%	27%	28%
25 to 29	17%	14%	12%
30 to 34	13%	9%	9%
40 to 49	9%	7%	7%
35 to 39	9%	6%	6%
50 and Older	5%	4%	5%

Table D4. College Demographic Data (2021/22), Socioeconomic Status (SES)

Demographic	American River College (*n* = 40,175)	Cosumnes River College (*n* = 20,718)	Folsom Lake College (*n* = 13,358)
Low SES	73%	79%	70%
Not Low SES	27%	21%	30%

Table D5. College Demographic Data (2021/22), First-Generation Status

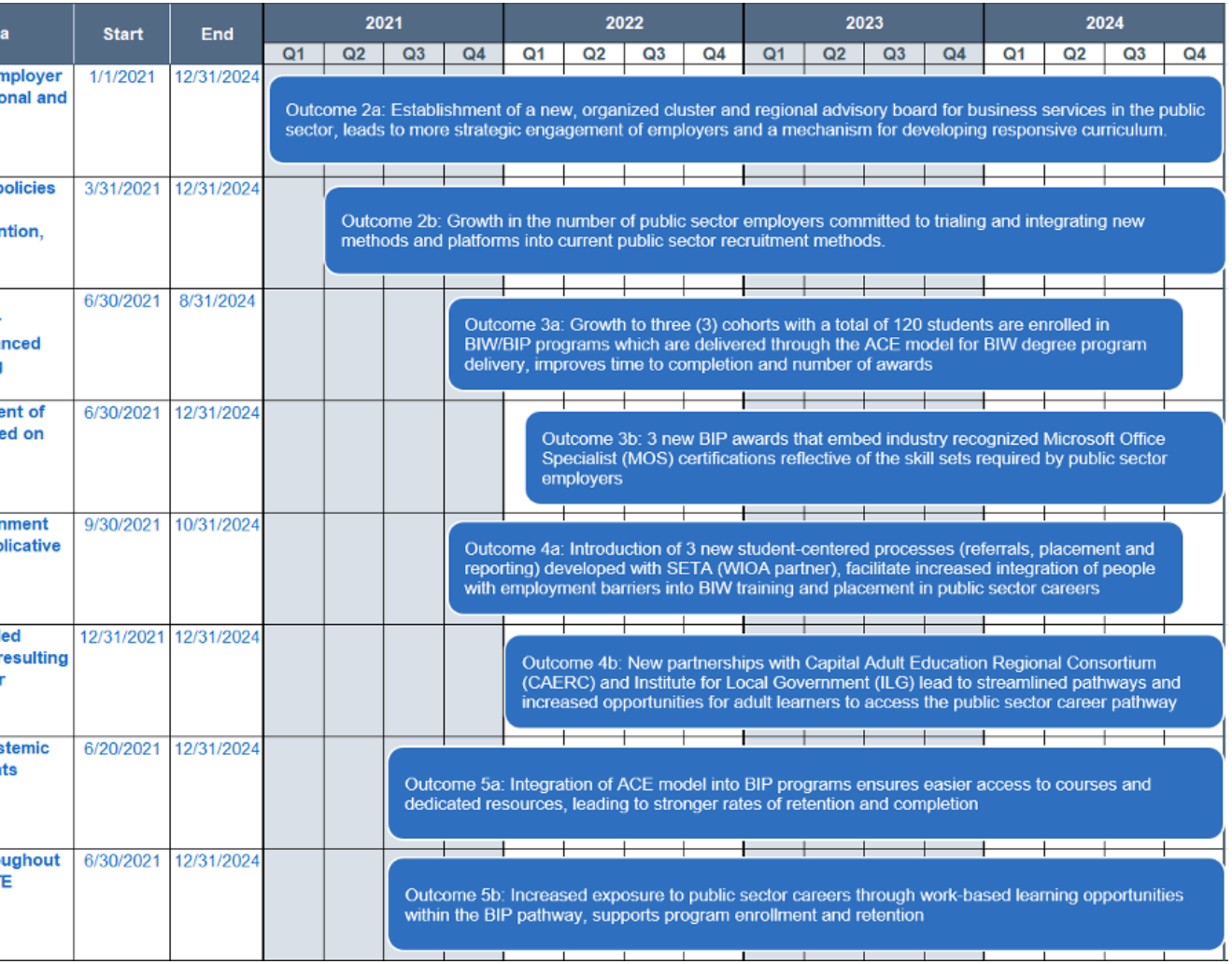
Demographic	American River College (*n* = 40,175)	Cosumnes River College (*n* = 20,718)	Folsom Lake College (*n* = 13,358)
Not First-Generation Student	44%	47%	55%

Appendix E. Project Timeline

Los Rios District's *Crosswalking Business Pathways to Public Sector Careers* project encountered various delays that impacted implementation and, ultimately, scope. The delays, which are detailed in the main body of the report, caused changes in the timeline. Figure E1 and the following accessible text version of Figure E1 presents the project's revised timeline as of the end of the grant period in winter 2024.

Figure E1. Project Timeline (Gantt View)

Sector Strategies	SCC Performance Outcome Area	Start	End
CORE ELEMENT #2: SECTOR STRATEGIES AND EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT	2a. Increase in the level and depth of employer engagement and investment in educational and training programs	1/1/2021	12/31/2024
	2b. Percent of employers that change policies to better support work-based learning opportunities and/or employment, retention, and advancement of career pathways participants	3/31/2021	12/31/2024
CORE ELEMENT #3: ENHANCED CAREER PATHWAY PROGRAMS AND ACCELERATED LEARNING STRATEGIES	3a: Design or implementation of new, accelerated instructional techniques or technologies, including the use of advanced online and technology-enabled learning	6/30/2021	8/31/2024
	3b. Measure of restructuring or alignment of educational and training programs based on local or regional labor market data	6/30/2021	12/31/2024
CORE ELEMENT #4: STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT WITH THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM	4a. Increase in program and policy alignment across systems and/or decrease in duplicative services or service gaps.	9/30/2021	10/31/2024
	4b. Development of new and/or expanded partnerships among key stakeholders resulting in streamlined or expanded services for participants	12/31/2021	12/31/2024
CORE ELEMENT #5: INNOVATIVE SYSTEMS CHANGE Option A: Accelerated Learning Pathways	5a: Measure of removing significant systemic barriers for career pathways participants	6/20/2021	12/31/2024
	5b. Increase in linkages developed throughout CP to encompass bridge programs, CTE programs, and WBL	6/30/2021	12/31/2024



Note: The following pages present the data in this figure in an accessible text format.

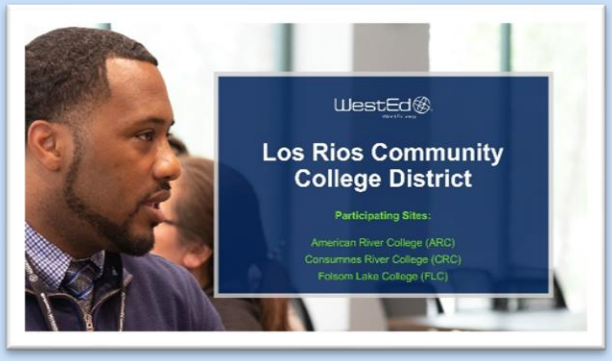
Table E1. Project Timeline (Table View)

Sector Strategies	SCC Performance Outcome Area	Start	End	Outcome
Core Element #2: Sector Strategies and Employer Engagement	2a. Increase in the level and depth of employer engagement and investment in educational and training programs	1/1/2021	12/31/24	Outcome 2a: Establishment of a new, organized cluster and regional advisory board for business services in the public sector, leads to more strategic engagement of employers and a mechanism for developing responsive curriculum
	2b. Percent of employers that change policies to better support work-based learning opportunities and/or employment, retention, and advancement of career pathway participants	3/31/2021	12/31/24	Outcome 2b: Growth in the number of public sector employers committed to trialing and integrating new methods and platforms into current public sector recruitment methods
Core Element #3: Enhanced Career Pathways Programs and Accelerated Learning Strategies	3a: Design or implementation of new, accelerated instructional techniques or technologies, including the use of advanced online and technology-enabled learning	6/30/2021	8/31/24	Outcome 3a: Growth to three (3) cohorts with a total of 120 students are enrolled in BIW/BIP programs which are delivered through principles of the ACE model for BIW degree program delivery, improves time to completion and number of awards
	3b: Measure of restructuring or alignment of educational and training	6/30/2021	12/31/24	Outcome 3b: 3 new BIP awards that embed industry recognized Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) certifications reflective of the skill sets required by public sector employers

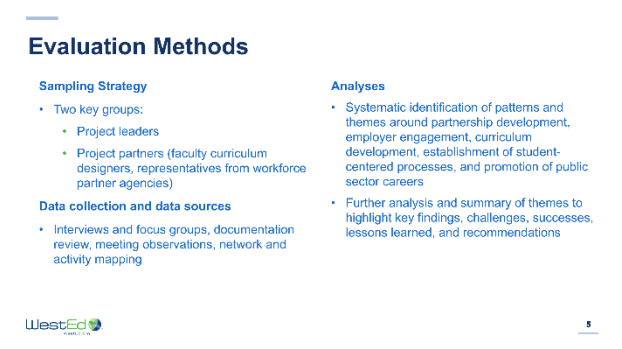
	programs based on local or regional labor market data			
Core Element #4: Strategic Alignment with Workforce Development System	4a: Increase in program and policy alignment across systems and/or decrease in duplicative services or service gaps	9/30/2021	10/31/24	Outcome 4a: Introduction of 3 new student-centered processes (referrals, placement, and reporting) developed with SETA (WIOA partner), facilitate increased integration of people with employment barriers into BIP training and placement in public sector careers
	4b: Development of new and/or expanded partnerships among key system actors that result in streamlined or expanded services for participants	12/31/2021	12/31/24	Outcome 4b: New partnerships with Capital Adult Education Regional Consortium (CAERC) and Institute for Local Government (ILG) lead to a streamlined pathway and increased opportunities for adult learners to access the public sector career pathway
Core Element #5: Innovative Systems Change	5a: Measure of removing significant systemic barriers for career pathways participants	6/20/2021	12/31/24	Outcome 5a: Integration of ACE principles into BIP programs ensures easier access to courses and dedicated resources, leading to stronger rates of retention and completion
	5b: Increase in linkages developed throughout a career pathway, to encompass bridge programs, career and technical training programs, and work-based learning	6/30/2021	12/31/24	Outcome 5b: Increased exposure to public sector careers through work-based learning opportunities within the BIP pathway, supports program enrollment and retention

Appendix F. Presentation

The following table presents the study findings in the form of images from a PowerPoint slide deck. The PowerPoint deck is accessible at [URL or name of web location for placeholder hyperlink – Need from Heidi].

Slide	Content
	Crosswalking Business Pathways to Public Sector Careers Department of Labor (DOL) Strengthening Community Colleges (SCC) Training Grants Program Evaluation January 2021 – December 2024
	**Los Rios Community College District** Participating Sites: • American River College (ARC) • Cosumnes River College (CRC) • Folsom Lake College (FLC)

Slide	Content
	Goals and Activities • Increase access to public sector careers for adult learners with barriers to employment within the Sacramento region • Leverage partnerships and cross agency alignment strategies to create new Business Information Professional (BIP) curriculum • Design proactive advising programs for BIP students and incorporate opt-out scheduling and sequential enrollment to maximize course availability
	Evaluation Goals and Approach • Monitor project implementation to help inform program improvement • Track how the project team developed capacity and implemented systems change • Document collaboration between education and workforce partners • Capture curriculum development and alignment across education partner sites

Slide	Content
	**Evaluation Methods** **Sampling Strategy** • Two key groups: ○ Project leaders • Project partners (faculty curriculum designers, representatives from workforce partner agencies) **Data collection and data sources** • Interviews and focus groups, documentation review, meeting observations, network and activity mapping **Analyses** • Systematic identification of patterns and themes around partnership development, employer engagement, curriculum development, establishment of student-centered processes, and promotion of public sector careers • Further analysis and summary of themes to highlight key findings, challenges, successes, lessons learned, and recommendations

Slide	Content
	Findings **Activities** • Designed support programming for BIP students • Engaged with public sector employers to understand workforce needs and opportunities • Incorporated input from workforce partners into the BIP curriculum • Created a culture of collaboration among partnering community colleges **Successes, Challenges, Lessons Learned, Recommendations** • Adapted and was persistent when faced with barriers • Collaborated successfully to develop and align the BIP curriculum • Developed strong management and communication systems • Weathered leadership changes • Recognized that collaboration can continue with other projects in the future

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