Collaborative Counselor Training Initiative (CCTI)

State-Specific Counselor Training Modules: States participating in the CCTI contracted with a leading instructional design firm (Education Development Center) to create online training modules for middle grades and high school counselors that can improve their effectiveness in preparing all students for college — especially those from low-income families who would be first-generation college students.

The states in the collaborative now are making the modules available to all states that wish to purchase a license, at a cost substantially less than the original development cost. The modules can be customized for any state joining CCTI.

Target Audience: The modules are designed for middle grades and high school counselors and postsecondary student services professionals, including college admissions counselors and financial aid advisors. States can also use the modules for professional development of school principals and teachers who serve as advisors.

Flexibility to Meet State Needs: The modules are designed for online delivery, either as three distinct modules for professional development credit or as a complete course for certificate endorsement or academic credit. States also can use a subset of the modules for optional one- or two-day, face-to-face professional development workshops.

Content can be customized with specific information about going to college in a particular state, including state-specific graduation requirements, postsecondary institutions, college planning tools and resources, and scholarships.

High-Quality Content: In addition to instructional design by EDC, the materials were designed and developed by a team of leading counseling faculty from postsecondary institutions, practicing middle grades and high school counselors (including the ASCA National Counselor of the Year), curriculum specialists and other content experts.
Facilitator Training and Support: Included in the cost for a license to customize and use the materials is a contract with EDC to train four facilitators in that state to teach the course or individual modules. Facilitators will be trained with other facilitators in the region in an online class that covers both the content and pedagogy.

The class will include an online orientation during the first session with:

- an overview of the online environment
- an overview of the module series
- strategies for building an online learning community
- effective online facilitation techniques
- an overview of course management tools
- assessment techniques for online courses, and
- training to support counselors in preparing the final module project.

In addition, EDC will maintain a Web site for facilitators to provide them with support and information about the course and connect them with other course facilitators across the region.

Course Management Systems: The modules can be delivered in any course management system, including Moodle, Desire2Learn and Blackboard.

Praise for Strategies for School Counselors in Career and Academic Counseling

“I am blown away by the quality and quantity of materials. The resources are absolutely excellent! I appreciated the attention to multiple learning styles. These modules are a wonderful resource for counselor preparation! THANK YOU!” ~ College professor

“I especially like the way the Action Plans tie everything together. They provide the school counselor with a ‘how-to’ way to meet the unique characteristics and needs of their student population.” ~ College Professor

“I was pleased to see the depth of the materials. The comprehensive nature of the course is wonderful. I am already using the [resources] on students who are college-capable but do not enroll. My ideas are budding all over the place and I find myself energized by the course. Thank you!” ~ College Professor

“I am very impressed with all aspects of the course layout and design! I particularly like the fact that the class is designed to accommodate various learning styles. The course seems to have something for everyone!” ~ Professional Development Instructor

“What struck me the most … was the extent of the content. I was pleased to see how comprehensive and multidimensional it is. I believe this course should be a requirement in counselor education programs!” ~ Counselor

“Remarkably coherent, seamless, easy to understand and follow” ~ Professional Development Instructor

“Helps school counselors and higher education enrollment professionals work more productively together.” ~ Professional Development Instructor

“Even students whose parents went to college can benefit—systems have changed dramatically in 20 years.” ~ Professional Development Instructor
Course Description: *Strategies for School Counselors in Career and Academic Counseling*

The modules incorporate a learning community approach, which has proven effective for delivering online professional development for educators. Under this approach, school counselors participate in the online courses as a “cohort” — or group — and in structured online discussions with their colleagues and the instructor during each of the online module sessions.

Each module includes:

- goals for learning
- online readings
- explorations of online resources for students, such as test preparation, scholarships and interactive college-choice Web sites
- practical online or off-line activities, including building a bank of resources to assist students with career or college choices
- focused online discussion prompts to guide each session’s discussions with other counselors
- short videos of actual counselors demonstrating effective practices
- a culminating project that enables counselors to demonstrate what they have learned during the module, and
- resources counselors can incorporate into their work with students immediately.

All modules require discussion and participation; they each include a pre- and post-assessment to gauge what counselors have learned. In addition, when the modules are taught as an academic course, they may culminate in a final project.

Module One

**Session One: Role of the Counselor in Promoting Career and Academic Planning**

This session focuses on the role of the counselor in assessing postsecondary career and academic options, as well as the importance of postsecondary advisement, and guides counselors to understand the diverse school populations with whom they work.

**Session Two: Creating a College-Going Mission**

This session discusses the importance of the school counselor as an advocate for improving student achievement and creating a “college-going” mission in the school.

**Session Three: Understanding and Working with Diverse Populations**

This session builds self-awareness and cultural understanding by helping counselors develop approaches for working with diverse groups of students to attain educational and postsecondary goals.

**Session Four: Communicating a College-Going Mission**

This session addresses communicating with diverse populations to develop a “college-going” mission and belief in their participation in college or other postsecondary experience.
Module Two

Session Five: Engaging Students in Early Career Awareness and Planning
This session examines the importance of students’ early career awareness and planning, as well as strategies counselors can use to engage students during the middle grades or earlier. Participants will review the 16 National Career Clusters and read about how to organize a career fair in their schools.

This session explores the importance of using data to guide students and parents in course selections and to align courses with career interests and planning. It also emphasizes the importance of encouraging the selection of courses that are rigorous.

Session Seven: Academic Planning: Part II
In this session, participants focus on using data to monitor the progress of struggling students and to plan interventions. Participants also practice strategies to help students and parents understand the impact of each course grade on the GPA.

Session Eight: College/Postsecondary Choice
This session focuses on helping students and parents make choices for postsecondary education and find the right fit among many options in academics, size, cost, location, school culture/atmosphere and diversity.

Module Three

Session Nine: Guiding Parents and Students Through the Complexities of Financial Aid
This session unravels the complexities of financial aid, including terminology, strategies to help parents and students understand the total cost of college or postsecondary education, and best sources of financial assistance for a particular situation, including grants, loans and scholarships.

Session 10: Assisting with the Financial Aid Process
In this session, participants learn the process parents and students need to follow to complete the FAFSA, what information they will need, what financial aid terminology means, and what types of aid they can receive based on the FAFSA.

Session 11: Preparing for College Admission Tests
In this session, participants plan ways to help students prepare for college admissions tests. This session also addresses fees and waivers, test-taking strategies and practice tests, and helping parents and students understand what scores mean.

Session 12: College Admissions: Application Process
This session focuses on ways counselors can assist students in completing the application process for the postsecondary schools they have selected.

About the Collaborative: CCTI is funded by grants made to the individual states by the U.S. Department of Education’s College Access Challenge Grant program, which aims to increase the number of students from low-income families who prepare for, apply to and succeed in postsecondary education. Participating agencies include the Alabama Department of Education, the Delaware Higher Education Commission, the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning, the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. The collaborative is coordinated by the Go Alliance of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB). For more information, contact Alice Anne Bailey at 770–819–4112 or Joan Lord 404–875–9211; or visit www.goallianceonline.org.