



Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

FY 2025

WORKPLAN

FY 2025 WORKPLAN

Our Vision

WICHE will strive to provide access to postsecondary education opportunities that are both valuable and equitable for residents of the West, so that all may realize their potential as individuals and contribute to the region's economic, social, and cultural vitality.

Our Mission

WICHE works collaboratively to expand educational access and excellence for all residents of the West. By promoting innovation, cooperation, resource sharing, and sound public policy, WICHE strengthens higher education's contributions to the region's social, economic, and civic life.

The Workplan

Each May, WICHE's 48-member Commission develops and approves the compact's annual Workplan. The Workplan highlights WICHE's strategic priorities and outlines the diverse activities, projects, and initiatives of the organization for the fiscal year (FY) 2025 beginning July 1, 2024, all of which are intended to advance WICHE's mission.

Our Strategic Priorities

- ▶ **AFFORDABILITY & FINANCE (A/F):** Supporting the alignment of appropriations, tuition, and financial aid policy and practice at the institutional, state, and federal levels to make postsecondary education more accessible to those who seek it.
- ▶ **ACCESS & SUCCESS (A/S):** Improving access to and success in postsecondary education for all students, especially those who have been historically underserved, by developing and sharing evidence-based strategies.
- ▶ **WORKFORCE & SOCIETY (W/S):** Collaborating across all sectors, including but not limited to behavioral health, business, and industry, to meet the region's workforce needs so that our communities can thrive.
- ▶ **INNOVATION (I):** Developing and supporting advancements in teaching and learning, student services, and technology to help students access and succeed in postsecondary education and increase the value of their investment after completion.
- ▶ **VALUE & ACCOUNTABILITY (V/A):** Collecting and measuring sound data about postgraduate outcomes to determine the true value of WICHE's partnerships for students and society at large so that we can continually improve how students, institutions, and WICHE members spend their time, effort, and money on postsecondary education and workforce training.

WICHE UNITS

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

- ▶ **PROGRAMS AND SERVICES (PAS):** The Programs and Services unit is where students thrive and institutional leaders collaborate. The unit's primary goals are to broaden student access and success and to foster higher education collaborations that address institutional strategic goals. The Programs and Services unit manages WICHE's three Student Access Programs and other initiatives that help institutions and students — undergraduate, graduate, and health professional — save money and efficiently use available resources. The unit also oversees initiatives that bring together the West's higher education leaders to address shared goals and concerns and develop a new cadre of college and university leaders. The Programs and Services unit notes when a particular topic or issue warrants further exploration. The unit works with campus leaders to create communities of practice, often grant funded, to examine these issues and explore solutions. Additionally, the unit helps institutions achieve cost savings through several programs in collaboration with the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC), which created and administers the joint purchasing programs.
- ▶ **POLICY ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH (PAR):** The Policy Analysis and Research unit supports better-informed decision-making by providing policy analysis and data resources and leveraging its convening power to foster regional collaboration. The unit leads research projects and collaborative initiatives focusing on open educational resources, the West's workforce challenges, and supporting postsecondary education and completion. WICHE staff provides expertise on higher education issues, including demographic change, governance, equitable opportunity in higher education, adult learners, state and federal financial aid, finance, articulation and transfer, federal policy, and college completion initiatives. WICHE is responsible for implementing the Western region's State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (W-SARA). The unit's publication series, *WICHE Insights*, explores a wide range of significant policy issues. The unit also undertakes major long-term grant-funded projects, collaborates with other regional and national organizations, and provides short-term technical assistance to WICHE partners.
- ▶ **BEHAVIORAL HEALTH (BHP):** The WICHE Behavioral Health Program, established in 1955, seeks to support the public systems of care and the workforce that serve people with behavioral health issues and their families. The program pursues this mission through partnerships with state behavioral health agencies, federal agencies, advocacy and consumer groups, and higher education institutions. The WICHE BHP's activities focus on direct technical assistance to state and local agencies, policy analysis and research, support of state behavioral health agency data analysis, and higher education liaison activities to enhance workforce development and campus behavioral health.
- ▶ **WCET – WICHE COOPERATIVE FOR EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES:** WCET promotes collaboration and information-sharing related to educational technologies in higher education. Established in 1989, WCET's mission is to be the leader in the practice, policy, and advocacy of digital learning in higher education. It works in three divisions: WCET membership, State Authorization Network (SAN), and Every Learner Everywhere (ELE). Memberships through WCET and the SAN support hundreds of higher education professionals across the U.S. and Canada. ELE advocates for equitable outcomes in U.S. higher education through advances in digital learning. WCET's strategic plan focuses on practice, policy, equity, and community in fulfilling its vision of advancing learner access and success through postsecondary digital learning for a more equitable world.

Our Work, Our Activities, and Our Projects

WICHE, an organization founded on the principle of collaboration, prides itself on working in partnership across these four units to better serve the region. The final section of this Workplan highlights collaborations across WICHE. When appropriate, some initiatives also extend beyond the WICHE region.

Each of the following sections is organized according to these categories:

- ▶ **CURRENT ACTIVITIES:** Current work that is either classified as Ongoing Services and Resources (continuing work supported by the General Fund or fees) or Projects and Initiatives (continuing or new work supported by grants, contracts, or fees)
- ▶ **NEW DIRECTIONS:** Commission-approved projects for which staff is seeking funding
- ▶ **POTENTIAL FUTURE PROJECTS:** Projects that staff is considering pursuing and/or bringing to the Commission for approval; also listed are previously considered projects that staff are proposing to remove from the Workplan
- ▶ **COMPLETED PROJECTS:** Projects that staff finished in FY 2024

Note: Current Activities are not given prioritization rankings since they are initiatives WICHE staff has already committed to undertaking. Projects in the New Directions category are prioritized by relevance to WICHE's mission, opportunity, and staff competence. Potential Future Projects are not given prioritization rankings because they are not approved and remain under consideration by the Commission.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Current Activities – Ongoing Services and Resources

Continuing work supported by the General Fund or by fees. All work in this category is considered high priority.

Focus: **A/F** Affordability & Finance **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **I** Innovation **V/A** Value & Accountability

PROJECT	FOCUS	GEO SCOPE	STAFF FTE	PARTNERS
Academic Leaders Toolkit	A/S	Western	(included in Forum and Alliance)	Forum and Alliance members
MHECare Student Health Solutions	A/F, A/S	WICHE, MHEC, NEBHE, SREB	0.1	Four vendors offering student, faculty, and staff health insurance and behavioral health services for students
MHECtech Technology Contracts	A/F	WICHE, MHEC, NEBHE, SREB	0.88	21 vendors offering hardware, software, printers and peripherals, data and networking, security services, and other technology services
Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP)	A/F, A/S, W/S	Western	1.2	All WICHE states, CNMI, and Guam fund and/or enroll students through PSEP's 130+ cooperating programs
Western Academic Leadership Academy (Academy)	W/S, V/A	Western	.10 and consultants	Forum and Alliance members
Western Academic Leadership Forum (Forum) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional Development: 2025 Annual Meeting Collaborative Projects 	A/S, W/S	Western	0.65	WICHE states and Pacific Island jurisdictions; 52 institutions, 9 systems
Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders (Alliance) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional Development: 2025 Annual Meeting Collaborative Projects 	A/S, W/S	Western	0.65	WICHE states and Pacific Island jurisdictions; 68 institutions, 8 systems
Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP)	A/F, W/S, A/S	Western	0.9	WICHE states and Pacific Island jurisdictions; 67 participating institutions
Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE)	A/F, W/S, A/S	Western	0.9	WICHE states and Pacific Island jurisdictions; 169 participating institutions

The **ACADEMIC LEADERS TOOLKIT**, jointly funded by the Alliance and Forum, is a peer-reviewed, searchable online repository of decision-making tools that college, university, and system-level academic leaders contribute. Tools in various categories — program evaluation, creation, and elimination; faculty recruitment and retention; and learning-outcomes assessment — help academic leaders address various challenges.

MHECARE STUDENT HEALTH SOLUTIONS, a MHEC partnership available to WICHE states and Pacific Island jurisdictions offers institutions and systems a student health insurance plan underwritten by UnitedHealthcare Student Resources (UHCSR). UHCSR was selected through a competitive bid process, enabling member institutions to avoid a time- and resource-consuming request-for-proposal (RFP) process. MHECare now includes META Teletherapy and TAOConnect, which offers teletherapy services for students seeking counseling services. The most recent addition to MHECare is a whole health program for students, their dependents, graduates, and faculty and staff through HealthMarkets.

MHEC TECHNOLOGY CONTRACTS enables institutions to purchase off competitively bid master purchasing agreements for an array of hardware, software, and technology services. Several agreements are available to K-12 districts; state, county, local governments; and education-related nonprofits. More than 1,600 institutions and other entities in the WICHE region benefit from aggregated volume purchases that lower product costs and save institutions money and time.

The **PROFESSIONAL STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM** (PSEP) provides affordable access for students to 130+ healthcare professional programs at more than 60 institutions and in 10 healthcare fields. In academic year (AY) 2023-24, 557 students from 10 WICHE states and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) received \$14.5 million (reflecting investment by their home-state legislatures) in tuition benefits through PSEP. Since its 1953 inception, PSEP has helped more than 15,900 students, many of whom return to their home states to fill key healthcare positions. Staff are working with the Commission to implement recommendations from the 2023 PSEP Field Assessment and Review to ensure the program is an effective tool to meet the workforce needs of the West.

The **WESTERN ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP ACADEMY** (Academy) is a yearlong professional development program to expand the qualified chief academic leadership pipeline for two- and four-year institutions in the West. Academy activities focus on understanding the context of academic leadership, setting academic goals and priorities, and developing specific skill sets required of chief academic officers. Its seventh cohort, nominated by Forum and the Alliance members, commenced in July 2023.

The **WESTERN ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP FORUM** (Forum) brings together WICHE-region chief academic leaders from four-year institutions, associated systems, and state coordinating and governing boards to exchange ideas and information, share resources and expertise, and collaborate on regional initiatives. The Forum is funded primarily by membership dues, with additional funding provided by annual meeting sponsors.

The **WESTERN ALLIANCE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE ACADEMIC LEADERS** (Alliance) brings together academic leaders at community colleges and technical schools and related systems and state agencies to exchange ideas and information, share resources and expertise, and collaborate on regional initiatives supporting the two-year higher education sector. Like the Forum, the Alliance is funded by membership dues and annual meeting sponsors.

The **WESTERN REGIONAL GRADUATE PROGRAM** (WRGP) allows WICHE-region residents to pay reduced nonresident tuition rates for approximately 2,000 master’s degrees, graduate certificate, and doctoral programs at 67 participating public universities. In AY 2023-24, 2,877 students saved an estimated \$39.2 million in tuition through WRGP. Structured similarly to the WUE, Western public universities may make any graduate program eligible at the WRGP tuition rate at their discretion, which has significantly increased the number of students who can benefit. Participating institutions may also now have the option to charge WRGP students up to 150% of resident tuition, but the vast majority continue to charge students resident tuition.

The **WESTERN UNDERGRADUATE EXCHANGE** (WUE) is WICHE’s signature undergraduate tuition savings program and the nation’s largest of its kind, saving 47,248 students an estimated \$559.1 million in tuition in AY 2023-24. Currently, 167 public two- and four-year WICHE-region institutions allow WUE students to pay no more than 150% of resident tuition instead of nonresident tuition. The Programs and Services unit will continue to expand the marketing of WUE and WRGP to benefit more students and institutions through targeted, state-specific publicity and activities, as well as increased outreach to high school counselors and admissions advisers.

Current Activities – Projects and Initiatives

Continuing (or new) work supported by grants, contracts, or fees. All work in this category is considered high priority.

Focus: **A/F** Affordability & Finance **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **I** Innovation **V/A** Value & Accountability

PROJECT	FOCUS	GEO SCOPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE	PARTNERS
Interstate Passport®	A/S, I	U.S.		.1 FTE	72 institutions in 21 states across the country are members. Institutions in these and several other states are in the exploratory stage.
WICHE Academy for Leaders in the Humanities	A/S, W/S	Western	Mellon Foundation \$1.5 million grant	1.30 FTE	Western postsecondary institutions

INTERSTATE PASSPORT® was a national initiative that facilitated the block transfer of lower-division general education based on multistate, faculty-developed learning outcomes and proficiency criteria. It was the only nationwide network of institutionally accredited, nonprofit, public, and private two- and four-year institutions dedicated to general education attainment block transfer. It also provided institutions in the network with an academic progress tracking system for Passport transfer students, designed by registrars and institutional researchers in conjunction with the National Student Clearinghouse. The goal of Interstate Passport was to eliminate transfer students’ unnecessary repetition of learning previously achieved.




The **WICHE ACADEMY FOR LEADERS IN THE HUMANITIES** offers leadership development to tenured humanities faculty members. WICHE is collaborating with the Mellon Foundation and other key stakeholders to develop a two-year, campus-based immersive experience for faculty leaders. These leaders attend a three-day WICHE Institute for Leaders in the Humanities in Boulder, Colorado, focused on three key competencies: career planning and development, project management, and organizational design and agility. They will collaborate with upper-level academic administration to learn more about day-to-day operations, craft a campus project, receive internal and external mentoring, and develop a new network with the fellows appointed at other institutions.


New Directions

WICHE Commission-approved projects for which staff is actively seeking funding, prioritized as follows:

Focus: **A/F** Affordability & Finance **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **I** Innovation **V/A** Value & Accountability

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

PROJECT	FOCUS	PRIORITY	GEO SCOPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE / TIMELINE	PARTNERS
Compact for Faculty Diversity	A/S, W/S		National	TBD	TBD	MHEC, NEBHE, SREB
No Holding Back - Assessing the Use of Administrative Holds	A/S, A/F		U.S.	American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), National Association of Collegiate and University Business Officers (NACUBO), members of the Alliance and Forum, Policy Analysis and Research, MHEC, SREB, NEBHE		
Reducing the Postsecondary Attainment Gap for American Indians and Alaska Natives: Linking Policy and Practice	A/S		U.S.	Seeking additional external funding to assist NASNTI's further and sustain an institutional network	TBD	NASNTI's Tribal colleges, Tribal education departments, higher education organizations

PROJECT	FOCUS	PRIORITY	GEO SCOPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE / TIMELINE	PARTNERS
Cybersecurity Training for Senior Nontechnical Leaders	I, W/S		Western	In-kind	.05 FY 2025	WCET, DHS, FEMA

The **COMPACT FOR FACULTY DIVERSITY:** Staff members are collaborating with the other three higher education regional compacts to seek funding to reinvigorate the Compact for Faculty Diversity and its associated Doctoral Scholars Program. The programs would address the significant imbalance that continues nationwide in terms of the racial and ethnic composition of faculties. The goals of the initiative are to increase faculty diversity in all ranks and across all institution types to equal or exceed the diversity of the nation by engaging postsecondary systems, institutions, and leaders in concrete commitments to increase the hiring of faculty of color, supported by specific action plans.

NO HOLDING BACK – ASSESSING THE USE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HOLDS: WICHE’s Programs and Services unit and Policy Analysis and Research unit collaborated with the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions to provide institutions in the West with tools to (re)evaluate their administrative hold policies to improve student success and to use their data in policy formation better. We will continue disseminating these resources and seek new partners interested in continued application of the tools and policy implications.

REDUCING THE POSTSECONDARY ATTAINMENT GAP FOR AMERICAN INDIANS AND ALASKA NATIVES: Linking policy and practice, an initiative begun in late 2017 with funding from Lumina Foundation, continues to have strong relevance in light of the persistent postsecondary attainment gap of American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) students compared to other student populations. Staff will seek funding to continue efforts to reduce or eliminate these gaps at Native American-Serving Nontribal Institutions (NASNTIs) by supporting culturally relevant high-impact practices and fostering institutional and tribal collaborations to share and expand sustainable student support systems on campuses. Another major objective going forward is to continue to strengthen the NASNTI presence and impact in state and federal higher education policy arenas and to create a collaborative network of institutions serving large numbers of American Indian and Alaska Native students.

CYBERSECURITY TRAINING FOR SENIOR NONTECHNICAL LEADERS: As an additional component of the cybersecurity initiative, WICHE is continuing to develop partnerships with cyber experts and conducting outreach to WICHE states and Pacific jurisdictions to provide training for institutional nontechnical leaders for cyber protection.

Projects to be Removed from Workplan

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

Focus: **A/F** Affordability & Finance **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **I** Innovation **V/A** Value & Accountability

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

PROJECT	FOCUS	PRIORITY	GEO SCOPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE / TIMELINE	PARTNERS
MHEC Cyber Insurance	A/F	■ ■ ■	WICHE, MHEC, NEBHE, SREB		0.1	All WICHE members are eligible
Online Course Exchange – FlexPATH Alliance	A/S, I	■ ■ ■	U.S.	Grant request pending: \$1,416,883 National Science Foundation sub-award (5 years) The FlexPATH grant was not funded.	1.9	University of Nevada, Reno; New Mexico State University; University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign; and their respective community colleges
Online Course Exchange	A/S, I	■ ■ ■	U.S.		0	1 consortium serving 16 institutions

Potential Future Projects

Work that staff are considering pursuing and bringing to the Commission for approval, along with ideas generated by commissioners.

The **ALLIANCE ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP ACADEMY** would identify, develop, and prepare aspiring academic leaders for career advancement and success in progressively more complex administrative roles at community, junior, and technical colleges across the West.

Completed Projects

Work that staff finished in FY 2024:

The **PSEP FIELD ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW** conducted in 2023 studied the healthcare professions (dentistry, allopathic medicine, occupational therapy, optometry, osteopathic medicine, pharmacy, physical therapy, physician assistant, podiatry, and veterinary medicine) currently served by the PSEP program. The final assessment, delivered to the Programs and Services Committee in November 2023, reported how well these health fields are meeting regional workforce needs. It also recommended other professional areas that may help meet the region's current or future workforce needs.

INTERSTATE PASSPORT® was a national initiative that facilitated the block transfer of lower-division general education based on multistate, faculty-developed learning outcomes and proficiency criteria.

POLICY ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH

Current Activities – Ongoing Services and Resources

Continuing work supported by the General Fund or by fees. All work in this category is considered high priority.

Focus: **A/F** Affordability & Finance **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **I** Innovation **V/A** Value & Accountability

PROJECT	FOCUS	GEO SCOPE	STAFF FTE	PARTNERS
<i>Benchmarks: WICHE Region</i>	A/F, A/S, W/S, V/A	Western	0.025	N/A
Legislative Advisory Committee (LAC)	A/F, A/S, W/S, I, V/A	Western	0.25	WICHE states and Pacific Island jurisdictions
Peer-to-Peer Virtual Convenings	A/F, A/S, W/S, I, V/A	Western	0.15	WICHE states and Pacific Island jurisdictions
<i>Regional Fact Book for Higher Education in the West</i>	A/F, A/S, W/S, V/A	Western	0.025	N/A
State Policy and Data Profiles	A/F, A/S, W/S, I, V/A	U.S	0.2	N/A
<i>Tuition and Fees in Public Higher Education in the West</i>	A/F	Western	0.025	WICHE states and Pacific Island jurisdictions
<i>WICHE Insights</i>	A/F, A/S, W/S, I, V/A	Western	0.1	N/A
WICHE Policy Webinar Series	A/F, A/S, W/S, V/A	Western	0.1	Variable
WICHE State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (W-SARA)	A/S, I, V/A	Western	2.25	NC-SARA; Western SARA member states; MHEC, NEBHE, and SREB

The annual **BENCHMARKS: WICHE REGION** report analyzes key higher education metrics and information about the West’s progress in improving access to, success in, and financing of higher education. This resource helps stakeholders monitor regional changes over time and informs discussion in policy and education communities. Utilizing WICHE’s Policy Analysis Research Database (PAR), the *Benchmarks* data dashboard now includes state information and regional metrics.

The **LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE** (LAC) informs the Commission and staff about significant legislative issues related to higher education, and staff serves the LAC by informing members about emerging policy issues in the West and relevant policy research. LAC members are appointed by the Commission and meet annually.

Policy Analysis and Research unit staff provide support to the region through regularly scheduled **PEER-TO-PEER VIRTUAL CONVENINGS** on federal issues, student access and success, improving the value proposition for postsecondary education, and sharing promising approaches and strategies to common challenges in the West. The primary vehicle for this is a WICHE-facilitated bimonthly call among state and system chief academic officers. The unit has also spun off a separate call on health workforce issues.

The **REGIONAL FACT BOOK FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE WEST** presents regional and state-by-state data and analysis on policy indicators across a range of topics. These fiscal, demographic, economic, and social indicators provide up-to-date information for policymakers, educators, and researchers in the West. The *Fact Book's* downloadable data tables are updated periodically throughout the year. WICHE released several enhanced tables in FY 2022, providing increased detail and interactivity and adding new analysis. WICHE supplements the core data sources as much as possible to keep this resource contemporary and examines the overall utility of the full suite of data resources.

WICHE is building out **STATE POLICY AND DATA PROFILES** that capture state and Pacific Island jurisdictions postsecondary contexts. The Policy Analysis and Research Database (PARDB) enables the Policy unit to provide more detailed and relevant information specific to each WICHE states and Pacific Island jurisdictions. WICHE has been consulting with key stakeholders in the West about how these data resources can be most useful and expects to roll out these new profiles in FY 2025.

TUITION AND FEES IN PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE WEST annually provides comprehensive data about the tuition and fee rates published by public higher education institutions in the WICHE region, including changes in tuition and fee rates over the past one-, five- and 10-year periods. In addition to total tuition and fees, the report displays the average mandatory fees for each institution, state, and Pacific Island jurisdictions, over the past one, five, and 10 years, as well as what proportion of total tuition and fees they represent.

The **WICHE INSIGHTS** series consists of periodic briefs (usually published several times a year) that illuminate a higher education policy or research topic or that supplement a regular WICHE activity or release (such as the annual *Tuition and Fees* or the quadrennial *Knocking at the College Door* report).

The **WICHE POLICY WEBINAR SERIES** features staff, partners, and higher education stakeholders periodically hosting digital forums for registrants on selected higher education topics of interest. Anticipated topics for FY 2025 will likely continue to focus on COVID-19 recovery, with particular attention to enrollment declines and potentially worsening equity gaps due to changes in college-going behavior.

The **STATE AUTHORIZATION RECIPROCITY AGREEMENT (SARA)** is a voluntary agreement among states designed to establish comparable standards for U.S. states, territories, and freely associated states regulating postsecondary distance education. SARA expands access to postsecondary educational opportunities while ensuring meaningful consumer protections for students and reducing regulatory red tape for institutions. WICHE coordinates the membership of SARA states in the West through the WICHE State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (W-SARA). WICHE collaborates with the other regional compacts and the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) to provide national coverage and ensure consistency in the agreement's implementation.

Current Activities – Projects and Initiatives

Continuing (or new) work supported by grants, contracts, or fees. All work in this category is considered high priority.

Focus: A/F Affordability & Finance A/S Access & Success W/S Workforce & Society I Innovation V/A Value & Accountability

PROJECT	FOCUS	GEO SCOPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE	PARTNERS
Increasing Access, Affordability, and Equity Using OER: A National Consortium	A/F, A/S	Western, U.S.	\$200,000	1.25 FY 2025	Hewlett Foundation, MHEC, NEBHE, SREB
Support for the Wyoming Innovation Partnership	A/S, W/S, I	Western	\$120,000	0.75 FY 2025	Wyoming Community College Commission
<i>Knocking at the College Door – Projections of High School Graduates</i>	A/S, W/S	U.S.	\$150,000	1.25 FY 2025	TBD
A Hole in State Policy – Alternative Providers in Postsecondary Education	V/A, W/S, A/S, I	U.S.	\$77,000	.25 in FY 2024 and FY 2025	Pew Charitable Trusts, WCET

INCREASING ACCESS, AFFORDABILITY, AND EQUITY USING OER: A NATIONAL CONSORTIUM:

The Policy unit received funding to create a national consortium with the three other regional higher education compacts — the Midwest Higher Education Compact (MHEC), the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), and the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE) — focused on scaling the successful adoption of high-quality open educational resources to improve student outcomes, increase equity, and improve affordability. This effort started in FY 2021, and WICHE expects additional funding to continue this work into FY 2025. Significant collaboration and coordination exist across regions, with SREB leading the effort.

SUPPORT FOR THE WYOMING INNOVATION PARTNERSHIP: WICHE was contracted by the Wyoming Community College Commission to provide project management for a broad initiative that seeks to modernize and focus Wyoming’s efforts to develop a resilient workforce and economy. The effort aims to better align Wyoming’s economic development agenda by increasing collaborations among state entities and, ultimately, local partners. Additionally, WICHE works closely with the Wyoming governor’s office on this initiative.

KNOCKING AT THE COLLEGE DOOR – PROJECTIONS OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES: In December 2024, the Policy unit will release the 11th edition of state forecasts of high school graduates. During FY 2025, staff will ramp up analytic efforts and prepare for a major release and dissemination of new data.

A HOLE IN STATE POLICY – ALTERNATIVE PROVIDERS IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION: In this project, the Policy unit will work with WCET and Pew Charitable Trusts to consider appropriate frameworks to address the rise of alternative credentials in postsecondary education. This work will help ensure that WICHE states and Pacific Island members can take advantage of legitimately innovative and disruptive ideas while also protecting students from the predatory practices of substandard providers.

New Directions

WICHE Commission-approved projects for which staff is actively seeking funding, prioritized as follows:

Focus: **A/F** Affordability & Finance **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **I** Innovation **V/A** Value & Accountability

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

PROJECT	FOCUS	PRIORITY	GEO SCOPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE / TIMELINE	PARTNERS
Building Evidence for Scale – Policy and Practice Solutions for Adult Learners	A/S, W/S	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	U.S.	\$1.5M - \$2M	1.75 4 years	TBD
Improving Policy and Practice to Support Behavioral Health on Campus	A/S, W/S	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Western	TBD	TBD	Western states
Policy Paper Series on Affordability	A/F, A/S	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Western	\$500,000	1.5 2 years	TBD
Western Postsecondary Data Users Network	A/S, W/S, V/A	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Western	\$50,000	0.5 6 months	Western states
Articulating the Value of Postsecondary Education in the West	TBD	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Western	TBD		Western states
Policy and Practice Solutions for Workforce Shortages	A/S, W/S, I	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Western	\$400,000	2 years	TBD
Intermediaries for Scale Partnerships	A/F, A/S, I	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Western, U.S.	TBD	TBD	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

BUILDING EVIDENCE FOR SCALE – POLICY AND PRACTICE SOLUTIONS FOR ADULT LEARNERS:

Building on its Adult College Completion Network and other work related to adult learners, WICHE proposes pursuing new approaches to achieve four objectives: a) build the evidence base for effectively serving adult learners; b) facilitate collaboration among network members; c) share scalable solutions across the field; and d) link adult college completion work with the broader agenda to ensure the equity of opportunity. The project will also seek to partner with WICHE states and Pacific Island jurisdictions and other key stakeholders to increase the number of adults with a postsecondary credential of value. To accomplish that goal, the project will identify high-impact supports for adult learners that correlate with increased credential completion; develop effective and aligned policy and practice for serving adult learners in concert with WICHE members, postsecondary systems and institutions, employers, and local leaders; and measure the impact of initiatives aimed at increasing adult postsecondary credential completion to drive continuous improvement.

IMPROVING POLICY AND PRACTICE TO SUPPORT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ON CAMPUS: The Policy unit will continue exploring ways to improve behavioral health in postsecondary education, building on a recently completed successful project. This work will likely focus on several potential approaches, including meeting future behavioral health workforce needs, building supportive state- and system-level networks to improve the dissemination of promising approaches, and catalyzing the adoption of broad-based approaches to student health and wellness.

POLICY PAPER SERIES ON AFFORDABILITY: The Policy unit will commission a series of papers focused on policy and practice actions to improve postsecondary affordability. The papers (including WICHE as a key author) will aim to provide rigorous, actionable research accessible to policymakers.

WESTERN POSTSECONDARY DATA USERS NETWORK: Education and workforce development agencies continue to improve data systems that have the potential to provide critical information to students and their families, policymakers, and institutional leaders. To take full advantage of these systems, states, territories, and freely associated states must have highly competent staff to analyze the available data and convert it to usable information for improving programs and policies. Additionally, researchers must have opportunities to explore new areas of research that can drive policy conversations. Barriers to taking advantage of these data systems include limited opportunities for state postsecondary researchers to engage in professional development, heavy workloads managing existing reporting duties leaving little time for exploratory analyses, and few chances to network with colleagues to address common problems. WICHE hopes to address these issues by exploring the need for and, if appropriate, establishing a Western Postsecondary Data Users Network, which would convene key system and institutional education and workforce researchers, as well as key staff from WICHE states and Pacific Island jurisdictions, to address common questions, provide technical assistance, and assist in professional development. This network would ensure that Western policymakers have access to high-quality evidence to develop, assess, and improve education and training policies and programs.

ARTICULATING THE VALUE OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION IN THE WEST: The Policy unit will work on multiple approaches to understand and articulate the value of postsecondary education for diverse stakeholders, including a focus on where that value is not meeting broader expectations. This effort will begin with a general articulation of the broad dimensions of value, including the economic return to individuals and communities, civic and cultural value, and other social dimensions of value that are not easily captured in earnings data. This work will have an explicit focus on how value is articulated in diverse Western contexts.

POLICY AND PRACTICE SOLUTIONS FOR WORKFORCE SHORTAGES: The Policy unit regularly convenes key staff from WICHE members to focus on ways to address short- and long-term workforce shortages in health fields using general fund dollars. Staff has developed a broader proposal to carry out a project that would implement solutions being developed while focusing on building a strong research base into effective and sustainable long-term policy and practice.

INTERMEDIARIES FOR SCALE PARTNERSHIP: Although not selected to be one of the Intermediaries for scale grantees of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, WICHE has completed multiple partnerships with those organizations that were selected. The American Indian Higher Education Consortium previously brought in WICHE to facilitate its efforts to develop an effective data infrastructure and staff capacity. Staff will continue to review other opportunities to partner with Intermediaries for scale where the work fits with WICHE's mission and expertise. If consulting opportunities consistent with WICHE's mission are unavailable in FY 2025, staff will recommend removing this item from the Workplan.

Potential Future Projects

Work that staff are considering pursuing and bringing to the Commission for approval, along with ideas generated by commissioners.

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS: The Policy unit will continue to identify areas where WICHE can help build policy- and practice-relevant research focused on organizational priorities, including student access and success, postsecondary value, and reaching underserved populations, including rural students, military and veteran students, adult learners, incarcerated individuals, and students of color. Additionally, this work could include topic-specific research and analysis.

LEVERAGING WORK-BASED LEARNING TO IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES AND MEET WORKFORCE DEMANDS IN RURAL AREAS: The goal of this work would be to help facilitate the development of partnerships among institutions and businesses to ensure effective linkages between the workplace and the classroom through co-op/internship programs. Staff believe this approach may have particular benefits for rural areas.

STATE POLICIES TO SUPPORT MEETING STUDENTS' BASIC NEEDS: Housing and food security are crucial issues for students across the West (and the United States as a whole). While campus-level supports such as food banks and emergency grants and loans can help, this effort would examine state- and territory-level policies that can improve student outcomes, including better alignment of social services and education programs, improved access to benefit programs, and other approaches.

WESTERN POLICY FORUM: An annual convening designed to advance WICHE's mission by bringing together key postsecondary leaders in the Western region to learn about successful strategies around access and success, accountability, finance, workforce, and innovation.

Completed Projects

Work that staff finished in FY 2024:

IDAHO ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE GROWTH INITIATIVE: The Idaho State Board of Education commissioned an analysis from WICHE to explore whether Idaho was producing enough

engineering and computer science graduates to meet the needs of the state's economy in response to concerns raised by industry leaders. Guided by an industry advisory group, the WICHE team reviewed existing research, analyzed data, modeled the projected supply of graduates, and conducted a range of employer engagement activities to identify evidence of a substantial gap between supply and demand for graduates in these fields. The [final report](#) details the key areas in the educational pipeline where the state might consider investing to increase the supply of graduates.

IMPROVING POLICY AND PRACTICE TO SUPPORT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ON CAMPUS: WICHE completed an initial component of our planned broader effort in this space, bringing together health and postsecondary education leaders from several states who have focused on large-scale efforts to improve behavioral health and wellness. Although this work is considered completed, staff are committed to building on this effort. Commitment from Lumina Foundation to support an initial convening of exemplar states and systems focused on improving behavioral health and wellness in postsecondary education. Additionally, conversations continue with other partners about large-scale efforts to scale healthy practices through policy.

Current Activities – Ongoing Services and Resources

Continuing work supported by membership dues or by fees. All work in this category is considered high priority.

Focus: **A/F** Affordability & Finance **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **I** Innovation **V/A** Value & Accountability

PROJECT	FOCUS	GEO SCOPE	STAFF FTE	PARTNERS
WCET Member Services and Support	A/S, I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	425 member institutions, agencies, organizations
Digital Learning Practice	A/F, A/S, I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	WCET members, Every Learner Everywhere, other organizations
Digital Learning Policy	A/S, I, V/A	U.S.	WCET staff	WCET members, SAN, NASASPS, NC-SARA, other organizations
WCET Annual Meeting	A/S, W/S, I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	WCET members, sponsors
WCET Leadership Summit	A/S, W/S, I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	WCET members, sponsors
WCET Webcast Series	A/S, W/S, I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	Various, depending on the topic
wcetMIX (Member Information Exchange) and Member-only Resources	A/S, W/S, I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	WCET, SAN, and member leadership
State System of Multi-Institutional Consortia Digital Learning Leaders	A/F, A/S, I	U.S.	WCET staff	Higher education systems and multi-institution consortia
State Authorization Network (SAN)	A/S, I, V/A	U.S.	WCET staff	149 members representing ~ 900 institutions, regional compacts, NASASPS, NC-SARA
WCET Steering Committee Annual Priorities	A/F, A/S, I, V/A	U.S.	WCET staff	WCET-elected Steering Committee and other members

WCET MEMBERSHIP SERVICES AND SUPPORT helps colleges, universities, higher education organizations, state agencies, and companies understand both the practice and policy of digital learning by providing timely information and a collaborative community. The popular WCET *Frontiers* blog features promising practices, innovations, emerging policies, compliance advice, and member profiles. The WCET *Frontiers* podcast series was introduced to provide engaging interviews about solutions and innovations in the practice and policy of digital learning in higher education.

WCET, the State Authorization Network (SAN), and Every Learner Everywhere (ELE) continue to collaborate to provide in-depth analysis of **DIGITAL LEARNING PRACTICES** that have an impact on faculty and students. These groups are noted for their experience in providing members and the field with information on digital learning practices that enhance student success. Past areas of focus include artificial intelligence, digital student support services, digital accessibility, assessment and academic integrity, microcredentials, and learning analytics.

WCET and SAN continue to collaborate to provide in-depth analysis of **DIGITAL LEARNING POLICIES** (federal, state, accreditation, and regulatory) that have an impact on faculty and students. WCET and SAN are noted for their expertise on policy issues, including consumer protections for digital learning students, regular and substantive interaction for distance education, state authorization of out-of-state activities, out-of-state professional licensure regulatory requirements, and digital learning definitions.

WCET events include the **ANNUAL MEETING, MEMBER-ONLY LEADERSHIP VIRTUAL SUMMIT, AND MONTHLY WEBCAST SERIES**. WCET's annual meeting is an in-person event, bringing together up to 400 leaders and practitioners interested in good practices in digital learning in postsecondary education. Members and non-members attend. The 2023 Annual Meeting had 316 attendees and had many multiple sessions of various topics. The member-only Virtual Summit takes place in the spring and is a half-day, single topic-focused event. The 2023 Virtual Summit had over 140 attendees, and the 2024 Virtual Summit focused on artificial intelligence. The monthly Webcast Series showcases innovative practices and effective policies in digital learning, with an average attendance of 150 members and non-members.

WCETMIX is a digital platform to support communication, collaboration, and resource-sharing among WCET members with approximately 5,000 participants (members and non-members). Members are invited to communicate through WCET's popular *wcetNEWS* and *wcetDISCUSS* digital forums. SAN also uses *wcetMIX* to support communication and sharing among its members.

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

The **STATE AUTHORIZATION NETWORK (SAN)** is a membership organization, created in 2011 as a division of WCET, that empowers its members to successfully resolve state and federal regulatory challenges to improve student consumer protections in digital and experiential learning across state lines. SAN serves postsecondary institutional staff who must translate and implement educational technology regulations as well as the agencies that support that work. Related issues include state institutional approvals, reciprocity, professional licensure, employment law issues, international compliance, and military-related considerations. SAN does this through providing members with an online library of resources and tools, policy analysis, virtual and in-person trainings, and facilitating communication so that members can cooperate to identify common needs, track emerging policies and regulations, evaluate their efficacy, and share lessons learned. SAN is developing a second edition of its Professional Licensure Handbook that will assist the public in navigating federal professional licensure regulations.

Each year, the **WCET STEERING COMMITTEE** selects **ANNUAL PRIORITIES** to provide insights and resources to assist members. Working groups are formed to advise and assist in developing webinars, conference sessions, blog posts, reports, and other resources to inform the membership. The selected topics for 2024 were:

- ▶ **Artificial Intelligence** – As these tools become ubiquitous, how do we tackle the instructional, academic integrity, and equity issues related to generative artificial intelligence?
- ▶ **Digital Learning Economics** – As higher education faces affordability challenges, what are the costs of digital learning and how can digital learning assist in making higher education more affordable and accessible?

Current Activities – Projects and Initiatives

Continuing (or new) work supported by grants, contracts, or fees. All work in this category is considered high priority.

Focus: A/F Affordability & Finance A/S Access & Success W/S Workforce & Society I Innovation V/A Value & Accountability

PROJECT	FOCUS	GEO SCOPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE	PARTNERS
Artificial Intelligence: Policy and Practice in Higher Education	A/S, W/S, I, V/A	U.S.	Internal	0.5	WCET, external consultants, and other digital learning nonprofits as needed
Emerging Federal Policies	A/F, I, V/A	U.S.	Internal	2	WCET, SAN, WICHE Policy unit
Every Learner Everywhere	A/F, A/S, I	U.S.	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (Oct 2022 – Dec 2024) \$66,88,840	1.5-5.8 / 2017-25	13 partner organizations
A Hole in State Policy – Alternative Providers in Postsecondary Education	V/A, W/S, A/S, I	U.S.	\$77,000	.25 in FY 2024 and FY 2025	Pew Charitable Trusts, WCET, WICHE Policy Unit

The impact of **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE** has undergone an extensive buildup and now upon us. In November 2023, OpenAI released ChatGPT, a chat interface for its GPT large language model AI. Using the chat interface, users can make a seemingly endless array of queries of GPT 4 that result in often stunning responses. The relative ease in getting the program to create everything from poems to short answers to complete essays has led many faculty and administrators to worry about the academic integrity of coursework. Others are urging faculty to rethink assessment practices and find ways to integrate generative artificial intelligence, especially ChatGPT, into coursework. Artificial Intelligence will remain one of WCET’s focus areas in 2024 and will include the production of several blogs, webinars, and both public and member-only reports. This work is being funded through internal investment but may lead to additional funding opportunities.

The years 2024 and 2025 will be unusually full of **EMERGING FEDERAL POLICY** discussions regarding digital learning in higher education. Both the U.S. Department of Education and the Veterans Administration have rules regarding professional licensure programs. The department has undertaken rulemaking on accreditation, distance education Title IV tracking, and state authorization for distance education, and digital books and resources that will be finalized in Fall 2024. The department has also indicated that it will release new guidance on third-party services and online program managers in 2024. NC-SARA is facilitating the new SARA Policy Modification Process intended to be more inclusive and transparent. Legislation is likely in U.S. Congress on short-term Pell grants and on housing allowance for Veterans studying at a distance. WCET and SAN staff will continue to follow these policy proposals and inform members.

EVERY LEARNER EVERYWHERE (ELE) is a network of 13 partner organizations working collaboratively to help institutions use new technology to innovate in teaching and learning, with the ultimate goal of improving student outcomes for Black, Latino, and Indigenous, poverty-affected, and first-generation students. WCET is an intermediary for the network, which is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and is also one of the participating partners. The most involved partner organizations include Achieving the Dream, American Public and Land-Grant Universities, and the Online Learning Consortium. Service topics include information on adaptive learning, equitable pedagogical practices in digital learning, evidence-based teaching practices for digital learning, and techniques for putting students first in the classroom.

In collaboration with the WICHE Policy Analysis and Research unit, WCET will work on **A HOLE IN STATE POLICY: ALTERNATIVE PROVIDERS IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**. This project will examine the role that alternative providers play in the development and offering of postsecondary credentials. The Policy Analysis and Research unit (assisted by WCET) will work with key state partners to develop appropriate frameworks to address the rise of alternative providers of postsecondary education. This work will help ensure that states can leverage the advantages of legitimately innovative and disruptive ideas while also protecting students from the predatory practices of substandard providers.

New Directions

Projects that might need WICHE President approval for which staff is actively seeking funding, prioritized as follows:

Focus: **A/F** Affordability & Finance **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **I** Innovation **V/A** Value & Accountability

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

PROJECT	FOCUS	PRIORITY	GEO SCOPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE / TIMELINE	PARTNERS
Price and Cost of Distance Education	A/S, W/S, I, V/A		National	Internal	0.5 1 year	WICHE Policy Unit

In 2017, WCET conducted national research on the **PRICE AND COST OF DISTANCE EDUCATION**. A survey of institutions sought to collect information on the price that institutions charge students for a distance education course and the cost to create that course. The work led to the realization that the views of practitioners and policymakers are completely at odds. An update of the 2017 analysis is needed for the post-COVID higher education world.

Completed Projects

Work that staff finished in FY 2024:

WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY PROJECT FOR WCET AND SAN: WCET and SAN used the services of WebAIM, part of the Institute for Disability Research, Policy, & Practice, at Utah State University, to improve its website accessibility. SAN has begun a similar extensive review of its website with WebAIM, with the hopes to have the work completed in the next fiscal year.

EVERY LEARNER EVERYWHERE has successfully closed out five grants and one contract and has primarily transitioned to using a new three-year network investment grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The focus of this year has been on the major reinvestment grant, and with its new deliverables focused on a new governance system, new technical assistance providers, selecting and onboarding new equity-first organizations, and creating a menu of services, an institutional digital learning assessment tool, and quality service standards. The network continued to be a recognized leader in equity in digital learning through multiple conference presentations, resources, and blog posts. Additionally, Every Learner onboarded a new director in June 2023, after the previous one resigned in February 2023.

The **WCET ANNUAL MEETING** took place in New Orleans, Louisiana, in October 2023. The 35th Annual Meeting had over 300 attendees. Sessions covered an array of digital learning and higher education topics including information about recently released regulations, artificial intelligence, the array of digital learning definitions and need for clarity, microcredential strategies, accreditation challenges and changes, and quality in digital learning. The Annual Summit for Women in eLearning (ASWE) was held in conjunction with the WCET Annual Meeting; this is the first time ASWE was held in-person and had 72 attendees.

The **MEMBER-ONLY VIRTUAL SUMMIT** topic for 2023 was the evolving business models for higher education, which resonated with WCET members as many institutions were seeking strategies for increasing revenue and retention. Over 140 people participated in the one-day virtual event. The 2024 event focused on artificial intelligence and higher education.

The **WCET WEBCAST SERIES** is popular with the WCET community because it is free and open to all, featuring experts and practitioners who share pragmatic advice and lessons learned on digital learning topics. Topics for 2023 include accessibility considerations in open education, effective tools and strategies for AI and academic integrity, microcredentials, and enrollment challenges.

The **WCET ONLINE COMMUNITY** moved to a new platform in March 2024. The new platform, Sengii, provides a better user experience by allowing WCET members to navigate the platform and discussions more intuitively. The original platform, Higher Logic, had become increasingly cost-prohibitive.

Potential Future Projects

Work that staff are considering pursuing:

Focus: **A/F** Affordability & Finance **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **I** Innovation **V/A** Value & Accountability

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

PROJECT	FOCUS	PRIORITY	GEO SCOPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE / TIMELINE	PARTNERS
Setting Definitions for Learning Modalities	A/S, A/F, I		U.S. and Canada	\$150-200,000 (initially)	0.5 1 year	Canadian Digital Learning Research Association

SETTING DEFINITIONS FOR LEARNING MODALITIES: WCET and the Canadian Digital Learning Research Association will build on an existing body of work to create more standard definitions for digital learning modalities. In a recent survey by WCET, only 52% of institutions stated they had an institution-wide definition of distance learning, 41% had definitions for online learning, and 20% had definitions for hyflex learning. This leaves students, faculty, and other groups and agencies guessing what each institution calls these experiences. Developing these definitions could serve policy at the federal, regional, and/or state levels while also allowing for local flexibility. Most importantly, such definitions would provide better clarity for students to know what to expect when they enroll and participate in a course described with these terms.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROGRAM

Current Activities – Ongoing Services and Resources

Continuing work supported by membership dues or by fees. All work in this category is considered high priority.

Focus: **A/F** Affordability & Finance **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **I** Innovation **V/A** Value & Accountability

PROJECT	FOCUS	GEO SCOPE	STAFF FTE	PARTNERS
BHP Member Service and Support	A/S, I	Western	WICHE BHP staff	WICHE-region state behavioral health authorities
Western States Decision Support Group (WSDSG): Annual Membership Program	A/S, I, V/A	Western	WICHE BHP staff	WICHE-region state behavioral health data specialists

BHP MEMBER SERVICE AND SUPPORT: The WICHE states and Pacific Island jurisdictions are asked to contribute a nominal support fee of \$15,000 to the WICHE BHP to be a member of the Behavioral Health Oversight Council, to provide guidance to and collaboration. As part of the regional collaborative, states will have a platform to perform regional collaborative projects; have access to regional training to support workforce development and system improvement; have available to them consultation and technical assistance on a variety of policy issues; and be part of an interstate networking and resource sharing collaborative.

WESTERN STATES DECISION SUPPORT GROUP (WSDSG) ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM: Since 1985, the WICHE BHP has been managing the WSDSG, an information-sharing membership-based network for behavioral health data and evaluation staff and managers from WICHE states and Pacific Island jurisdictions. The WICHE BHP manages quarterly conference calls to discuss emerging behavioral health data and system evaluation issues and provides ongoing support to WSDSG members. The WICHE BHP also organizes an annual meeting with training and presentations for WSDSG members to stay apprised of developments and best practices in the field of behavioral health data and evaluation. Funding is based on an annual membership fee of \$6,000.

Current Activities – Projects and Initiatives

Continuing (or new) work supported by grants, contracts, or fees. All work in this category is considered high priority.

Focus: **A/F** Affordability & Finance **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **I** Innovation **V/A** Value & Accountability

PROJECT	FOCUS	GEO SCOPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE	PARTNERS
Alaska Psychology Internship Consortium – Interns and Technical Assistance	A/S, W/S	Western	\$150,000	7/23-6/24	State of Alaska; Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority

PROJECT	FOCUS	GEO SCOPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE	PARTNERS
Alaska Psychiatric Institute – Regulatory Compliance Technical Assistance	A/S, V/A	Western	\$197,100	4 years	State of Alaska
Arizona Evidence-Based Practices Fidelity Monitoring*	W/S, V/A	Western	\$915,428	6.5 7/23-6/24	State of Arizona
Arizona – Mercy Care C.A.R.E.S. Training	W/S, V/A	Western	\$70,000	2/24-3/25	Mercy Care
Colorado Behavioral Health Administration Technical Assistance	W/S, A/S	Western	\$168,015	0.75 11/23-6/24	State of Colorado
Guam Psychology Internship Consortium	A/S, W/S	Western and Pacific Jurisdictions	\$62,745	0.5 10/23-9/24	U.S. Territory of Guam
Hawai'i Psychology Internship Consortium*	A/S, W/S	Western	\$1,929,212	0.5 7/23-6/24	State of Hawai'i
Hawai'i Recruitment of School-Based Clinical Psychologists*	W/S	Western	\$100,000	Ongoing	State of Hawai'i
Hawai'i Recruitment of School-Based Behavioral Health and Social Workers	W/S	Western	\$125,000	Ongoing	State of Hawai'i
Idaho Psychology Internship Consortium*	A/S, W/S	Western	\$125,000	7/23-6/24	State of Idaho
Montana PACT Fidelity Reviews*	W/S, V/A	Western	\$221,400	1.5 7/23-6/24	State of Montana
Mountain Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (MP-MHTTC)	A/S, W/S	Western	\$449,809	1.5 8/23-9/24	University of North Dakota
Mountain Plains Rural Opioid Technical Assistance Center (MP ROTAC)	A/F, A/S, I	Western	\$649,500	3	U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
NASMHPD Technical Assistance	W/S	Pacific Jurisdictions	\$48,750	2/24–9/24	National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors

PROJECT	FOCUS	GEO SCOPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE	PARTNERS
National Institutes of Health Behavioral Health Aide Assessment	W/S	Western	\$153,088	0.75 4 years	Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium; Northwest Indian College; University of Alaska – Anchorage
Nevada Psychology Internship Consortium	A/S, W/S	Western	\$358,094	0.25 8/23-8/25	State of Nevada
New Mexico Psychology Internship Consortium	A/S, W/S	Western	\$157,223	0.25 8/23-8/24	State of New Mexico; Indian Health Service
Oregon State Hospital Psychology Internship Program*	A/S, W/S	Western	\$3,000	7/23-6/24	State of Oregon
Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP)	W/S	Western	\$869,509	3 9/23-8/24	JBS International
Rural Veteran Suicide Prevention – Together With Veterans	W/S	U.S.	\$3,063,425	4.5 4/23-3/24	U.S. Veterans Administration's Office of Rural Health and Office of Suicide Prevention
Sanford Health Psychology Internship Consortium	A/S, W/S	Western	\$200,000	0.5 3 Years	Sanford Health
South Dakota IMP(ACT) Fidelity Reviews*	W/S, V/A	Western	\$49,900	0.25 6/23-5/24	State of South Dakota
South Dakota Psychology Internship Consortium	A/S, W/S	Western	\$175,000	0.25 8/22-11/24	State of South Dakota
University of Wisconsin Technical Assistance	A/S, W/S	U.S.	\$52,659	0.4 9/23-8/24	University of Wisconsin
Utah Psychology Internship Consortium*	A/S, W/S	Western	\$26,400	7/23-6/24	State of Utah

* WICHE expects these projects will be renewed, or they have already been renewed, for FY 2025.

ALASKA PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP CONSORTIUM (AK-PIC) INTERNS AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:

The WICHE BHP supports the ongoing operations of the AK-PIC for interns and faculty, including its engagement in the Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC) and achievement/maintenance of American Psychological Association (APA) accreditation. The AK-PIC consists of a multisite consortium of Alaska agencies that maintain at least one supervising psychologist onsite to provide supervision and didactic training to interns.

ALASKA PSYCHIATRIC INSTITUTE – REGULATORY COMPLIANCE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: The WICHE BHP was selected through a competitive bidding process to assist the Alaska Psychiatric Institute (API) in maintaining compliance with regulating agencies through review of policies, health information management, infection control, milieu management, risk management, medical staff credentialing, pharmacy practices, and life safety code and environment of care. The WICHE BHP will perform reviews and provide guidance on how to address shortcomings in policies and execution.

ARIZONA EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES (EBPS) FIDELITY MONITORING: The WICHE BHP partners with the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System to support the implementation and fidelity reviews of four EBPs in the Maricopa County public behavioral health system. The WICHE BHP supports a team of fidelity reviewers who review approximately 20 different providers in Maricopa County each year. In FY 2024, the project was expanded to include fidelity reviews throughout the balance of the state of Arizona.

ARIZONA MERCY CARE C.A.R.E.S. TRAINING: The WICHE BHP collaborates with Arizona-based Mercy Care through its C.A.R.E.S (Community Action Resources Education and Service) community giving initiative to plan and provide training to increase workforce expertise by implementing training strategies for evidence-based practices: Trauma-informed Care for Children, Youth and Adults; Transition to Independence Model; Infant-Toddler Mental Health Coalition of Arizona 0-5 Training; and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Substance Use Disorders including Opioids.

COLORADO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADMINISTRATION TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: The State of Colorado, Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) contracted with the WICHE BHP to provide technical assistance in the development of a Crisis Professional Training Curriculum consisting of 24 distinct modules. The WICHE BHP is augmenting the BHA staff with Crisis Professional Expertise by supporting the work of a Crisis Professional Advisory Board and reviewing curriculum modules.

GUAM PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP CONSORTIUM (GU-PIC): The WICHE BHP has partnered with the U.S. Territory of Guam to develop an accreditable psychology internship consortium to serve Guam and the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) and build the behavioral health workforces there. The WICHE BHP assists by guiding all phases of developing a psychology internship consortium to attract and retain qualified and highly trained behavioral health professionals in the territories. Guam-PIC graduated its first intern from the program in AY 2022-23.

HAWAII PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP CONSORTIUM (HI-PIC): The WICHE BHP supports the state of Hawai'i in developing and operating an accredited psychology internship consortium. A primary goal of the internship program is the establishment of a pipeline to build Hawai'i's behavioral health workforce. Three Hawai'i state agencies (the Department of Education, the Department of Health, and the newly formed Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation) will provide funding to support HI-PIC. Currently, 10 interns are participating in HI-PIC.

HAWAII RECRUITMENT OF SCHOOL-BASED CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGISTS: The Hawai'i Department of Education contracts with the WICHE BHP to recruit and contract with clinical psychologists to fill public school vacancies across the Hawaiian Islands.

HAWAII RECRUITMENT OF SCHOOL-BASED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS AND SOCIAL WORKERS: The WICHE BHP is assisting the Hawai'i Department of Education with marketing, recruitment,

screening, and referral services for school-based behavioral health (SBBH) and social work professionals to fill public school vacancies across the Hawaiian Islands. This effort is designed to increase the employment of SBBH and social work professionals.

IDAHO PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP CONSORTIUM (ID-PIC): The WICHE BHP is assisting the State of Idaho in continuing to operate an accredited psychology internship consortium. A primary goal of the internship program is to establish a pipeline to build Idaho’s behavioral health workforce, especially in rural and underserved areas. The Idaho State Board of Education received funding from the Idaho Legislature to support WICHE’s assistance in restructuring and expanding an existing unaccredited internship program and pursuing American Psychological Association accreditation.

MONTANA PACT FIDELITY REVIEWS: The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services’ Behavioral Health and Disabilities Division has contracted with the WICHE BHP to provide consultation and technical assistance to the division on the implementation of its Program for Assertive Community Treatment (PACT). This project includes conducting fidelity reviews for 14 PACT programs operating across the state, developing plans and focused training to promote the improvement of services, and consultation on outcomes and dashboard development.

MOUNTAIN PLAINS MENTAL HEALTH TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER CENTER (MP-MHTTC): The MP-MHTTC is a six-year partnership between the WICHE BHP and the University of North Dakota to provide comprehensive training, resources, and technical assistance to mental health providers and other practitioners across a six-state area. Funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the center specializes in rural and frontier mental health in Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming. The project is in the final year of its six-year award.

MOUNTAIN PLAINS RURAL OPIOID TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER (MP ROTAC): In October of 2022, the WICHE BHP was awarded a two-year grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to establish the Mountain Plains Rural Opioid Technical Assistance Center (MP ROTAC), which is dedicated to supporting opioid and stimulant prevention, treatment, and recovery in HHS Region 8, comprising Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming. MP ROTAC develops and disseminates resources, training, and technical assistance to rural communities across the continuum of care.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM DIRECTORS (NASMHPD) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: The WICHE BHP is a subcontractor to NASMHPD on its Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Technical Assistance Coalition and Transformation Transfer Initiative. The BHP has been focused on implementing and expanding 988 crisis services in rural and frontier regions through a series of training and technical assistance sessions for providers across the country. Additionally, the BHP will assist the CNMI in developing a behavioral health aide certification program.

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AIDE ASSESSMENT: The WICHE BHP, in collaboration with the Center for Alaska Native Health Research (CANHR) and the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC), was awarded a National Institutes of Health (NIH) research grant. This project evaluates the behavioral health aide program, focusing on efficacy, implementation, and best practices. As behavioral health workforce issues continue to grow in tribal areas, this research has the potential to significantly influence the development of new programs across the West.

NEVADA PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP CONSORTIUM (NV-PIC): The WICHE BHP assists the State of Nevada in the continued operation of an accredited psychology internship consortium. The primary goal of the internship program is to establish a pipeline to build Nevada’s behavioral health workforce. The Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health and Nevada WICHE provides support and funding for the BHP’s ongoing development and operation of the Nevada Psychology Internship Consortium.

NEW MEXICO PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP CONSORTIUM (NM-PIC): The WICHE BHP is working with partner agencies to develop a doctoral psychology internship consortium for the State of New Mexico. A primary goal of the internship program is to help develop New Mexico’s behavioral health workforce in rural and underserved areas. Through funding from the New Mexico Behavioral Health Services Division, the New Mexico Department of Health, and the federal Indian Health Services, the WICHE BHP is facilitating program development and helping to ensure the program meets American Psychological Association accreditation standards.

OREGON STATE HOSPITAL PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM (OSH-PIP): The WICHE BHP continues to assist the Oregon State Hospital Psychology Internship Training Program by supporting and maintaining the internship’s website.

RURAL COMMUNITIES OPIOID RESPONSE PROGRAM (RCORP): The WICHE BHP has partnered with JBS International to reduce morbidity and mortality associated with opioid overdoses and psychostimulant misuse in high-risk communities by strengthening the organizational and infrastructural capacity of multi-sector consortia. As a partner in this project, the WICHE BHP provides technical assistance to 66 rural planning and implementation opioid grantees and psychostimulant grantees funded for three years by the Health Resources and Services Administration.

RURAL VETERAN SUICIDE PREVENTION – TOGETHER WITH VETERANS: The WICHE BHP is collaborating with the Denver-based federal Veterans Administration, Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center (MIRECC) to develop and implement Together With Veterans (TWV), a Veteran suicide prevention program for rural communities. The program became operational in FY 2019, with four initial sites (two in Colorado, one in Montana, and one in North Carolina). Since then, the TWV program has been implemented in 38 rural communities, with 14 of those communities having completed their three-year commitment to the program. The TWV program sites are located in rural communities throughout the country, stretching from as far east as New Hampshire and as far west as Guam.

SANFORD HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP CONSORTIUM (SH-PIC): The WICHE BHP worked with the leadership of Sanford Health to help develop a psychology internship designed to provide a broad and culturally relevant training program to support the preparation and retention of doctoral-level psychologists in North Dakota and Minnesota. Sanford Health has an extensive national footprint and is a leading agency in advancing integrated health services (physical and behavioral). The internship development began primarily with Sanford’s integrated health sites in North Dakota.

SOUTH DAKOTA IMP(ACT) FIDELITY REVIEWS: The WICHE BHP is continuing to assist the South Dakota Division of Behavioral Health to evaluate the fidelity of the evidence-based practice Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) at community behavioral health clinics in three locations in South Dakota.

SOUTH DAKOTA PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP CONSORTIUM (SD-PIC): The University of South Dakota contracted with the WICHE BHP to develop a psychology internship consortium. The WICHE BHP is

working with the state to identify core partners for the internship, including the South Dakota Human Services Center in Yankton and other community-based partners. WICHE’s work will extend from planning and development to supporting achieving accreditation of the internship program.

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: The WICHE BHP is working in partnership with the University of Wisconsin through a Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grant to provide education and training to graduate students, practitioners, educators, and trainers. These learning collaboratives will focus on the integration of substance use disorder and mental health prevention, treatment, and recovery in rural communities. The WICHE BHP will provide expert trainers for a series of six trainings over 12 weeks, twice a year, for the next three years. Many expert trainers will be provided in conjunction with the ongoing work of WICHE’s Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP).

UTAH PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP CONSORTIUM (UT-PIC): The WICHE BHP works with partner agencies to develop the internship consortium’s self-study. This will help ensure the program meets the American Psychological Association accreditation standards and assist with the accreditation process.

New Directions

Projects that might need WICHE President approval for which staff is actively seeking funding, prioritized as follows:

Focus: **A/F** Affordability & Finance **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **I** Innovation **V/A** Value & Accountability
Project prioritization: ■ Relevance (mission critical) ■ Opportunity (funding) ■ Competence (staff/consultants)

PROJECT	FOCUS	PRIORITY	GEO SCOPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE / TIMELINE	PARTNERS
Expansion of Behavioral Health Aide Model in Pacific Jurisdictions	W/S, A/S	■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Western	TBD	1 year	Pacific Jurisdictions Native Alaskan Tribal Health Consortium
Improving Policy and Practice to Support Behavioral Health on Campus	A/S, W/S	■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Western	TBD	TBD	Western states
Mental Health Needs Classification System	W/S, I	■ ■ ■ ■	Western	TBD	1 year	State of Hawai'i Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
Mountain Plains Rural Opioid Technical Assistance Center - Re compete	A/F, A/S, I	■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Western	TBD	1 year	U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

EXPANSION OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AIDE (BHA) MODEL IN PACIFIC JURISDICTIONS: The WICHE BHP is providing technical assistance to the Community Guidance Center in the CNMI to launch a pilot project implementing the BHA model of a local community behavioral health paraprofessional worker, modeled after the Alaska BHA program. Concurrently, the WICHE BHP is providing technical assistance to the Pacific Behavioral Health Coordinating Council (PBHCC) to establish a certification system for BHAs. Current funding has been provided to WICHE from the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD), and there is interest from the other Pacific Jurisdictions to expand this effort. The WICHE BHP is exploring funding sources to support such expansion.

IMPROVING POLICY AND PRACTICE TO SUPPORT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ON CAMPUS: The Policy unit will continue exploring ways to improve behavioral health in postsecondary education, building on a recently completed successful project. This work will likely focus on several potential approaches, including meeting future behavioral health workforce needs, building supportive state- and system-level networks to improve the dissemination of promising approaches, and catalyzing the adoption of broad-based approaches to student health and wellness.

MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM: The WICHE BHP is working with the newly formed Hawai'i Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to explore the possibility of assisting the department in the development of a classification system to accurately assess the mental health needs of the department's patient population. This project would be designed to improve the types and quantity of services the department provides to its incarcerated population.

MOUNTAIN PLAINS RURAL OPIOID TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER – RECOMPETE: In October of 2022, the WICHE BHP was awarded a two-year grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to establish the Mountain Plains Rural Opioid Technical Assistance Center (MP ROTAC), which is dedicated to supporting opioid and stimulant prevention, treatment, and recovery in HHS Region 8, comprising Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming. The WICHE BHP will need to recompete for a new five-year funding opportunity to continue its work with MP ROTAC.

Potential Future Projects

Work that staff are considering pursuing:

COLORADO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADMINISTRATION – TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: The State of Colorado's Behavioral Health Administration has approached the WICHE BHP regarding an opportunity to continue supporting the Crisis Professional Curriculum project in Phase II of the project.

STUDENT WELLNESS AND MENTAL HEALTH: The WICHE BHP continues to seek opportunities and funding to partner with the Policy and Analysis unit and Lumina Foundation to support and improve college student wellness and mental health, to improve college completion and degree attainment for all students regardless of race, ethnicity, income, or mental health status.

Previously considered projects that we propose to remove from the Workplan: None at this time.

Completed Projects

Work that staff completed in FY 2024:

ALASKA MENTAL HEALTH TRUST AUTHORITY – TECHNOLOGY-MEDIATED SUPERVISION OF POST-GRADUATE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS: The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority contracted with the WICHE BHP to provide outreach, research, and documentation specific to best practices for supervising doctoral-level practitioners of psychology pursuing state licensure. The WICHE BHP reviewed accepted practices for supervision, including in-person, telephone, and video conferencing modalities for remote locations, ultimately presenting a policy analysis paper to the licensure boards in Alaska.

AVONDALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT REACCREDITATION TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: The WICHE BHP supported the Avondale Elementary School District’s reaccreditation of its Doctoral School Psychology Internship Program by providing technical assistance in its submission of reaccreditation to the American Psychological Association.

HAWAI’I EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES – RATES STUDY: The Early Intervention Services Section (EIS) of the Hawai’i Department of Health contracted with the WICHE BHP to complete another comparative review of early childhood services compensation methodology and pricing structures for both contracted services and related professional salaries such as general educator, occupational and physical therapists, and speech language pathologist. The EIS rates study compared Hawai’i rates to those in other, analogous states to ensure competitive pay to help maintain a sufficient workforce.

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

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH (NIH) ONLINE PUBLICATION UPDATE: The NIH contracted with the WICHE BHP to update its publication, *Mental Health and Rural America: An Overview and Annotated Bibliography*. The revision expanded the publication’s focus to include substance use and addiction, with particular emphasis on opioid addiction in rural and frontier areas of the United States.

NORTH DAKOTA BEHAVIORAL HEALTH WORKFORCE STUDY: The University of North Dakota (UND) contracted with the WICHE BHP to provide consultation and technical assistance to UND as part of the North Dakota Behavioral Health Plan Aim 7: Behavioral Health Workforce. WICHE convened and facilitated a Behavioral Health Workforce Summit with key stakeholders and developed a Behavioral Health Workforce Strategic Plan.

SOUTH DAKOTA HUMAN SERVICES CENTER OPTIMAL CAPACITY REVIEW: The South Dakota Department of Social Services contracted with the WICHE BHP to assist the state in establishing the optimal capacity and patient programming at the South Dakota Human Services Center.

SOUTH DAKOTA HSC OPTIMAL CAPACITY REVIEW – PHASE II: Provided policy guidance, technical assistance, and support for the implementation of focused programming and staffing models, assisting the state in establishing the optimal capacity and patient programming at the South Dakota Human Services Center.

COLLABORATIONS ACROSS WICHE UNITS

Focus: **A/F** Affordability & Finance **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **I** Innovation **V/A** Value & Accountability

PROJECT	FOCUS	UNITS	ACTIVITY CATEGORY	PARTNERS
A Hole in State Policy: Alternative Providers in Postsecondary Education	A/S, W/S, I, V/A	Policy Analysis and Research, WCET	Projects and Initiatives	In this project, the Policy unit will work with WCET and Pew Charitable Trusts to consider appropriate frameworks to address the rise of alternative credentials in postsecondary education. This work will help ensure that WICHE states and Pacific Island jurisdictions can take advantage of legitimately innovative and disruptive ideas while also protecting students from the predatory practices of substandard providers.
Cybersecurity Training for Senior Nontechnical Leaders	I	Policy Analysis and Research, WCET	Projects and Initiatives (DHS-funded and seeking funding)	The work entails interplay between WICHE's cyber fellow (under WCET auspices) and Policy Analysis and Research staff. The WICHE President is working with the teams to develop a sustainability plan.
Evolving Higher Education Policy Issues	A/S, I	WCET, Policy Analysis and Research	Projects and Initiatives (variously funded)	Through WCET's <i>Frontiers</i> blog and other avenues, these units contribute to the field by engaging on emerging issues on which WICHE has policy and research insights and context. This often leads to collaboration or co-publication in areas that recently have ranged from state authorization of distance learning to changes in IPEDS outcome measures data with implications for attainment metrics.
Improving Policy and Practice to Support Behavioral Health on Campus	A/S, W/S	Policy Analysis and Research, Behavioral Health Program	Projects and Initiatives (variously funded)	This prospective convening of state policymakers, institutions, and other stakeholders would take advantage of WICHE Policy unit and Behavioral Health Program expertise alike to identify policy and practice gaps related to campus behavioral health services and systems.
No Holding Back: Using Data to Review and Revise Administrative Hold Policies among Public Postsecondary Institutions in the Western Region	A/S, A/F	Programs and Services, Policy Analysis and Research	Projects and Initiatives (grant-funded)	WICHE's Programs and Services unit and Policy Analysis and Research unit collaborated with the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions to provide institutions in the West with tools to (re)evaluate their administrative hold policies to improve student success and to use their data in policy formation better. We will continue disseminating these resources and seek new partners interested in continued application of the tools and policy implications.