



BUILDING A DIVERSE CTE LEADERSHIP PIPELINE TOOLKIT GUIDE



The
Postsecondary
STATE CAREER TECHNICAL
EDUCATION LEADERS FELLOWSHIP

at **ADVANCE** CTE
State Leaders Connecting Learning to Work

sponsored by **ECMC**
Foundation



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This document is a guide for the Building a Diverse CTE Leadership Pipeline Toolkit and provides state leaders with specific examples of administrative processes, guiding questions to assist with tailoring the toolkit to your needs, and resources to replicate the promising practices used to design and facilitate the Postsecondary State Career Technical Education Leaders Fellowship at Advance CTE – Sponsored by ECMC Foundation (Fellowship). Prior to using this guide to begin developing your leadership program, we recommend reviewing the following toolkit components:



[An Introduction to the Building a Diverse CTE Leadership Pipeline Toolkit](#), which provides an overview of the goals and purpose of building a CTE leadership pipeline, as well as a full list of the components of the toolkit.

[An Overview of the Advance CTE Fellowship](#) which enables CTE leaders to learn from Advance CTE’s experiences associated with administering and facilitating the Fellowship.





USING THE GUIDE

Throughout this guide, you will see distinct features designed to help you tailor this guide to best fit the needs of your state.



TELLING OUR STORY provides CTE leaders with examples from the Fellowship to add use case context to the steps within this guide.



GUIDING QUESTIONS allow you to identify the needs and appropriate steps within your state. Be sure to download the fillable [workbook](#), which is a plug-and-play resource aligned with the guiding questions and recommendations to allow you to actively design your CTE leadership program as you work through the guide. The workbook also offers some additional tools to facilitate program development.



RECOMMENDATIONS provide actionable steps based on the lessons learned from the design and launch of the Fellowship.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES provides guidance to supplement and support your efforts in building a diverse CTE leadership pipeline.



Click on the stacked books icon found at the bottom of each page to return to the table of contents.

GETTING STARTED

As you begin your efforts, you should take a number of key steps to set your Fellowship up for success:

[Assess the landscape;](#)

[Define success;](#)

[Gather input;](#) and

[Select your advisory committee.](#)



Photo credit: ECMC Foundation





ASSESSING THE LANDSCAPE



In An Overview of the Postsecondary State Career Technical Education Leaders Fellowship at Advance CTE – Sponsored by ECMC Foundation, we share why Advance CTE decided to start the Fellowship – the reality of the incongruity of demographics between learners and CTE leaders and the increasing pace of leadership transition. The creation of the Fellowship was also in response to the needs of our members, who shared that they were struggling to fill and retain state staff. Our organizational vision further compelled us to take action and to leverage our organizational voice and positionality to create training and opportunities for aspiring leaders who are demographically representative of the learners they teach.

As you begin this journey, it is important to hone in on your “why” for creating a state leadership pipeline program. By answering the following guiding questions, you will be able to determine if your state needs to invest in crafting an initiative or program that will strengthen, expand and diversify your state CTE leadership pipeline. For most states, the answer will be something like a five-alarm bell that signals that their CTE leadership pipelines are in a state of emergency. If this resonates with your state, then you are in the right place!



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Are your CTE learner, educator and state staff/leadership demographics aligned, or are there equity gaps?
- Does your state have formal and informal infrastructure to attract, support and develop future state-level leaders? Are those systems working?
- Does your state have a CTE leadership program in place?
 - Does the existing program provide a robust and diverse talent pool to meet the state’s needs?
 - Was it designed with equity-minded leadership principles?
- Does your state have clear succession plans in place for key state CTE leadership positions?
- Do aspiring leaders, especially those from populations that are currently underrepresented in state CTE leadership, face systemic barriers that need to be understood and removed?
- What are the risks to your state’s learners and the CTE system if you do not have a diverse and robust talent pool of state CTE leaders?

Record your answers in the workbook.





DEFINING SUCCESS

Before any actions are taken, identifying the goal for your program and how you will define success are critical first steps.



TELLING OUR STORY

At Advance CTE, we knew that CTE learners were far more demographically diverse than current state CTE leadership and that the tenure for those leaders was rapidly shortening. Therefore, we chose to define the goal for our Fellowship as supporting and equipping mid-career postsecondary CTE leaders with the knowledge, tools and network to effectively lead high-quality and equitable postsecondary CTE at the state level.

To meet this goal, we set the following outcomes:

- At least 50 percent of the Fellows will be from marginalized or underserved populations.
- After completing the program, Advance CTE – ECMCF Fellows will be better positioned for roles such as State CTE Director, state-level leadership and institutional leadership.
- Advance CTE will receive an average satisfaction rating of 80 percent from Fellows for each workshop offered.
- Advance CTE – ECMCF Fellows will grow in their competencies and skills at least one point on a five-point scale.
- At least three members of each cohort will transition into a higher postsecondary CTE leadership role.



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What is the goal of your state CTE leadership program? Or if you need to create a CTE leadership program, what are potential goals to establish at the outset?
- How will you measure the state CTE leadership program's impact?
- What measurable outcomes do you want to achieve?

Record your answers in the workbook.





GATHERING INPUT

There is an African proverb that tells us “if you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.” The work of leadership programs is a long game, and it requires collaboration and partnerships to ensure that you not only design a robust program but also have allies and cheerleaders to help build visibility and support implementation. A key strategy for Advance CTE was to stand up an advisory committee to inform and guide the development of the Fellowship.



TELLING OUR STORY

For Advance CTE’s Fellowship, we created a [memorandum of understanding](#) (MOU) for our [National Advisory Committee](#) (NAC) members that defined their role, time commitment (including dates for meetings) and compensation. Our NAC had these responsibilities:

- Identification and recruitment of a diverse pool of participants and mentors;
- Promotion and dissemination of resources developed as a result of the program;
- Provision of input on curriculum content, design and delivery;
- Nomination and selection of participants;
- Support for and evaluation of real-world application projects implemented by participants; and
- Evaluation of program outcomes.

We compensated our NAC members. As an organization committed to equity, we felt compensating people for their time and expertise was important. We realize financial compensation is not always possible, but it is a key takeaway that we are now applying in other areas of work.

We were clear that the NAC was advisory. The members were not decision-makers. This clarity allowed us to gather diverse perspectives and not have to arrive at consensus, thus enabling the work to move forward while also ensuring that Advance CTE’s brand and core values were reflected in all decisions.

Finally, we also chose to have two members of the NAC serve as co-chairs, thus allowing the advisory committee to build trust with one another and to ensure that the space was being designed and facilitated in an equitable and inclusive manner so that we received honest and robust feedback.

“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.” – African proverb





SELECTING YOUR ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Selecting which stakeholders, partners and voices will inform the design and implementation of your state leadership program is vital. Diversity, equity and inclusion considerations are critical; intentionally recruiting diverse perspectives and lived experiences to serve on the advisory committee will ensure that the program is designed to support and foster equity-minded leaders who are committed to the success of all learners.

Who needs to be at the table (e.g., your state Association for Career and Technical Education chapter or union representatives)? Who might be threatened by the creation of this program or be a detractor? Are there existing programs, outside of CTE, you can learn from? Going through a stakeholder engagement mapping process, as outlined in the next paragraph, can be a helpful starting place to strategically select representatives (individuals, organizations) who meet your established criteria (demographics, tenure, lived experience) to shape and support the creation of your program.

Using this [Stakeholder Mapping](#) tool developed by the U.S. Education Delivery Institute, meet with your administrative team and complete the exercise to determine who your stakeholders are for your state's CTE leadership program.

Based on the stakeholder mapping exercise, consider which stakeholders' perspectives are essential to be part of an advisory committee and then complete the chart in the Building a Diverse CTE Leadership Pipeline Workbook to identify individuals to invite to serve. The sample chart encourages you to consider various dimensions of identity, demographics and representational expertise when finalizing your advisory committee roster.



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What roles and responsibilities do you want this advisory committee to have?
- What communities or stakeholders need to be represented on the advisory committee?
- How many people will be on your advisory committee?
- Will you have a chair (or co-chairs) of the committee?
- When and how often will they meet?
- Will there be any compensation for service on the committee?

Record your answers in the workbook.





DESIGNING YOUR PROGRAM

Now that you have identified key goals and foundational elements of your program, it is time to begin designing your program, focusing on a few key decisions:

- Selecting your audience of potential fellows;
- Defining the core competencies fellows should focus on;
- Establishing the program structure;
- Developing application and selection criteria.





SELECTING YOUR AUDIENCE

Reflecting on the goal(s) and measurable outcomes for your program, you will need to decide who your audience is. This decision is critical because it has implications for your curriculum, potential applicant pool size and composition, and ultimately the success of your program.



TELLING OUR STORY

Advance CTE chose to focus on mid-career professionals who had experience in the education, CTE and/or workforce development space. We made this decision because our goal was to expand and strengthen the state CTE leadership pipeline in the short term. By identifying mid-career professionals as our target audience, we were in essence selecting individuals who were one or two steps away from being able to be the State CTE Director. Further, this decision had an impact on our curriculum content. We did not have to spend time on 101 topics that introduced individuals to CTE basics. Instead, we could maximize our time on the application of an equity lens and mindset to topics that focused on policy and practice. Finally, based on other organizational initiatives, we knew we wanted to have a cohort of no more than 12-15 Fellows to ensure opportunities for bonding and relationship building among them, as well as have enough Fellows in the cohort to ensure diversity in lived experience.



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What experience must program participants have had to fully benefit from your program (tenure, content expertise, advisory or administrative experience, state-specific credential requirements)?
- What equity considerations or metrics are built into your program goals, and how do these considerations need to be reflected in your potential audience?
- How many participants do you want in each cohort of your program?

Record your answers in the workbook.





DEFINING CORE COMPETENCIES

The next step is a big one: What competencies do you want your participants to have when they leave your state's program? We strongly recommend that the advisory committee be a thought partner in defining the competencies.



TELLING OUR STORY

Advance CTE identified six competency areas for our Fellowship. These areas were identified based on our organization's 100-plus years of experience in supporting members, State CTE Directors and other state leaders. The topics were derived from feedback from our members on areas where they wanted more support and growth; observations of the skills and competencies impactful state leaders possess; focus areas of our New State Director Institute; and leverage and "push" areas the CTE community identified for itself in the shared vision, [Without Limits: A Shared Vision for the Future of Career Technical Education](#):

- Lead with an equity lens;
- Have a strategic mindset;
- Be a strong advocate;
- Build relationships/partnerships;
- Commit to high-quality policies and programs; and
- Be data driven.



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Considering your state's priorities for CTE, what competencies are needed to advance those priorities successfully?
- Are there leadership programs in other sectors that you can reference to help broaden your perspective?
- What are the desired competencies participants will be expected to attain during the program?

Record your answers in the workbook.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Consider interviewing successful state CTE leaders in your state (or in other states) and analyze the competencies they share and leveraging your advisory committee and their networks.





ESTABLISHING THE PROGRAM STRUCTURE

You have established your program goals and core competencies. Now it is time to determine how you will meet these goals and deliver these competencies for the target audience. Key considerations are your capacity and resources, as well as those of the participants. These considerations will influence:

- When your program will take place (during the weekday, evenings);
- Where it will take place (in person, virtual, hybrid); and
- How long it will take place (overall program length, as well as individual sessions).

Also it is important to consider how the core competencies should be delivered, practiced and applied, taking into account different learning styles. Again, this is a place where your advisory committee can be helpful!



TELLING OUR STORY

Based on our experience with other initiatives, we knew we wanted the Advance CTE Fellowship to have formal learning and opportunities to apply the learning in safe spaces. Further, given our commitment to equity we wanted to create brave spaces to learn and be vulnerable, as well as to build the network of the Fellows through exposure and leveraging our social capital. These factors influenced our program design, which included:

- **WORKSHOPS:** The formal learning component of the Fellowship was organized into seven half-day virtual workshops delivered over the course of 15 months.
- **COACHES:** Each Fellow was assigned a coach based on the preferences and priorities the Fellows identified in their application. Leadership journeys are difficult and often lonely, so having coaches was vital to support the Fellows and also model a practice we knew was invaluable for future leaders – having trusted allies who can support you and whom you can call in when needed.
- **REAL-WORLD PROJECT:** The Fellows identified in their Fellowship application a real-world project that aligned to their career progression goals. The goal of the project was to apply learning from the Fellowship – both formal and informal learning – and potentially contribute to the current resources available to the CTE field.





GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What will be the preferred delivery method of instruction and extended learning engagement opportunities?
- What delivery method will optimize the participation of your target audience?
- How frequently will sessions and activities be held?
- How long will the program run?
- What practical application of the knowledge, skills and competencies will adequately demonstrate proficiency?
- Should your program incorporate a mentoring or coaching component?

Record your answers in the workbook.

It is important to consider how the core competencies should be delivered, practiced and applied, taking into account different learning styles





DEVELOPING APPLICATIONS AND SELECTION CRITERIA

Program Application

When developing an application to recruit potential program participants, the application itself and the application process should be designed to achieve the desired participant composition and remove barriers to application completion.

Balance must be considered in several areas:

LENGTH: Include enough questions to understand the applicant's experience and background while not making the application burdensome to complete;

CAPABILITY: Design questions to ensure that the applicant has adequate experience to understand and apply program content while not creating an assumption that full competence is required to participate; and

SAFETY: Provide flexibility in the question format to allow applicants to share their personal or professional journey depending on their level of comfort in disclosing past and current experience.

Support should also be provided to assist potential participants in completing the application, including the use of office hours, technical support via electronic responses or other means, and flexibility for applicants to start and save their application rather than have to complete it in one setting.



TELLING OUR STORY

[Advance CTE's application](#) consisted of seven short-answer questions approved by the NAC. We required applicants to provide a resume as well as two references. Applications were completed online through SurveyMonkey Apply.



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Who will be your target audience for the program: instructors/teachers, mid-career administrators in CTE-only positions, education administrators with a combined background of traditional roles and limited CTE experience, or individuals with CTE backgrounds that are exclusive to postsecondary or secondary?
- How will recruitment activities be inclusive of and actively seek out diverse participants?
- What skill or knowledge areas should applicants have a solid understanding of prior to participating in the fellowship?
- What format will the application questions be (e.g., multiple choice, short answer or long answer)?
- Will references be required? Are there preferred types of references (e.g., supervisors, colleagues or learners)?
- What steps will be required after applications are submitted, such as interviews or a performance task? What benefits and barriers could those steps create?

Record your answers in the workbook.





Selection Criteria

Selection criteria is one of the most important aspects of developing a successful program and should be identified alongside the application. At its core, these programs should represent diversity across multiple identities and provide opportunities for individuals who historically have been marginalized from leadership development opportunities. Therefore, criteria should be developed to achieve these goals while also ensuring that participants are prepared to be successful in the program.



TELLING OUR STORY

The selection criteria for our Fellowship prioritized achieving a cohort with diversity among lived experience, geography and demographics; experience in CTE, but not necessarily at the postsecondary or state level; and a strong ability to benefit from the program through commitment to the work and plans for career progression aligned to program outcomes. The rubric assigned a total of 100 points across five categories, with a strong focus on an understanding of and commitment to racial equity. Members of the selection committee, which consisted of Advance CTE staff and members of the NAC, were able to access all applications, supplemental materials and the rubric through SurveyMonkey Apply. After completion of a quantitative rubric by the selection committee, the NAC discussed finalists for the Fellowship prior to final selection.



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Who will review applications? Will the selection committee include a mixture of organization staff members, advisory committee members, CTE affiliate organization members or other stakeholders?
- What tools or processes can you develop to support an equitable selection process?
- Are there any existing selection processes in your state you can learn from or platforms you can leverage?

Record your answers in the workbook.



LAUNCHING AND EXECUTING YOUR PROGRAM

With key decisions made, now it is time to plan for and execute the launch of your program, which requires, at minimum, a focus on:

- [Recruiting the right fellows;](#)
- [Having an equitable selection process;](#)
- [Building social capital for fellows;](#)
- [Building inclusive, brave and safe spaces;](#) and
- [Monitoring progress and making adjustments.](#)





RECRUITING THE RIGHT FELLOWS

How will you ensure that your applicant pool is robust and diverse? Consider a recruitment plan that engages your advisory committee and network, as well as program alumni after you have successfully completed your first program.

A recruitment plan should also align outreach channels and contacts with your intended audience. You may have to acknowledge that you are lacking connections to trusted sources for populations historically marginalized from leadership advancement. Consider this program an opportunity to develop these relationships — ideally before launching any application process.



TELLING OUR STORY

Advance CTE is fortunate to have a communications team, which we leveraged to craft a recruitment strategy. We created a promotional toolkit that provided plug-and-play social media images and messages, newsletter articles, and sample letters for our members and partners to send out to potential candidates. We did not spend a lot of money on advertising; in fact our paid advertising on social media was not that successful. Instead, we found success in leveraging our network, including our NAC members, who identified potential organizations and platforms to reach out to and provided feedback on our promotional materials. Ultimately, achieving our desired applicant pool required a lot of individualized outreach by our Fellowship's director.

We were intentional in the imagery we used in the promotional materials, ensuring demographic (race, gender, occupational area, etc.) diversity. Based on our research with learners and families around effective CTE messaging, we went through an exercise to establish a messaging triangle to ensure consistent and focused language throughout our promotional materials. Visit [Recruitment Strategies](#) on the Advance CTE website to learn more about our messaging research and tools.

Lastly, we monitored our progress by regularly checking our applicant pool composition. We knew we wanted to have 15 Fellows and aimed for at least a 4:1 ratio of applicants to Fellows. Further, we monitored the pool compared to our desired metrics for state, racial and gender diversity. Based on the applicant pool composition we adjusted our recruitment efforts along the way.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Consider the following ways to get the word out:

- Host at least one informational webinar;
- Host office hours to answer questions for potential applicants;
- Create shareable social media posts for partners and stakeholders to use;
- Draft shareable language to go in partners' and stakeholders' newsletters; and
- Leverage the [Journey to CTE Leadership video series](#).





GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What are the key messages you want to use to describe your program in recruitment materials?
- Whom can you leverage to get the word out, including both organizations and individuals?
- How big is your ideal applicant pool, and what measures of demographic diversity must that pool possess?
- Who will monitor the applicant pool (number and composition)?

Record your answers in the workbook.

A recruitment plan should also align outreach channels and contacts with your intended audience.





HAVING AN EQUITABLE SELECTION PROCESS

Whom you bring to the table to select the participants in your leadership program is equally as important as creating and developing an equitable recruitment process to ensure a diverse pool of applicants for the program. While you will want to include members of the CTE administrative team or your organization in each selection group, most of the selection committee should consist of members of the advisory committee that assisted with designing the leadership program.



TELLING OUR STORY

Advance CTE used a selection committee design of five groups to review applications for our Fellowship. Each group consisted of three NAC members and one Advance CTE staff member. The applications were submitted in SurveyMonkey Apply. Review groups had access to applicant responses along with the rubric, which was available in the software application for ease of use for reviewers. The rubric included the following categories on a 100-point scale:

The Postsecondary State Career Technical Education Leaders Fellowship at Advance CTE – Sponsored by ECMC Foundation Rubric:

Category	Indicators	Score	Notes
Applicant Background and Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant has spent a portion of their career in the CTE space • Applicant has clear professional goals and details how the Fellowship would impact those goals • Applicant would strongly benefit from the Fellowship 	/25	
Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project has clear impact on creating or expanding high-quality postsecondary CTE program(s) • Project addresses historically minoritized populations • Project includes clear measures of reach and impact 	/25	
Equity and Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application details a current understanding and/or willingness to grow in DEI competencies and skills • Application demonstrates a clear commitment to understanding and addressing racial equity • Application demonstrates a desire to address the systemic barriers in postsecondary CTE 	/50	





As your advisory committee and your leadership team finalize the selection process, the following is one fact to consider as learner populations are assessed and institutional needs reviewed:

Education leaders of color think differently about how students reach goals, frame tasks, create effective teams, and communicate ideas. As a result of historical and often shared [o]ppressions, they tend to challenge assumptions about ways in which schools and universities function, strategize, and operationalize teaching and learning in diverse societies. Their leadership practice is affected by the essence of who they are.¹



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Does your selection process account for the lack of opportunities afforded to applicants from marginalized or underserved communities?
- Did you consider alignment to learner population demographics during the selection process?

Record your answers in the workbook.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Once you have selected your participants, consider the following administrative steps for participants:

- Sign an [MOU](#);
- Complete a participant [enrollment form](#); and
- Complete a "[get to know you](#)" activity.

¹ Santamaría, L. J. (2014). Critical change for the greater good: Multicultural perceptions in educational leadership toward social justice and equity. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 50(3), 347-391.





BUILDING SOCIAL CAPITAL FOR FELLOWS

In many instances, especially currently with the high turnover rates in the CTE workforce, a number of your fellows will not be aware of the multiple and complex levers needed to influence CTE stakeholders and lead a high-quality CTE program. Building social capital is integral to leadership success as aspiring leaders begin to piece together that *what you know* is equally as important as *whom you know*. As you begin to think about the impact you would like the CTE leaders in your program to have, start building a list of agencies, organizations and institutions or programs they should have connections to, such as:

- CTE professional development and advocacy organizations for instructors and administrators;
- Chambers of Commerce;
- Postsecondary institutions and systems;
- Workforce agencies; and
- Community-based organizations representing under-served populations.



TELLING OUR STORY

Fellows connected with, learned from and shared lessons learned with Advance CTE's broader membership by attending at least one annual meeting (with travel and registration covered) as well as through our virtual events (with their membership covered). The events enabled the Fellows to continue to build their professional network and gain visibility for their work. We invited select Fellows to present their projects on Advance CTE webinars and/or be featured in case studies or reports, promoting their work to a national audience to continue to build their visibility. Additionally, Fellows were required to attend a yearly CTE Leadership Collaborative Convening hosted by ECMC Foundation.



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Who are the leading CTE organizations that fellows will need to connect with to be successful post-fellowship within your state or nationally?
- What levers or channels of communication do you have in place to highlight the participants in your program?
- What are the high-visibility CTE conferences or events that participants will need assistance with gaining access to so they can present or speak to increase their social capital?

Record your answers in the workbook.





BUILDING INCLUSIVE, BRAVE AND SAFE SPACES

Building trust and community among participants, and creating the tools to do so, are integral to the success of a leadership pipeline program.

For the Fellowship, we intentionally selected the cohort model due to the limited number of CTE leaders with tenure currently available in education systems across the nation. A cohort allows for the development of a peer-to-peer network that will sustain participants during and after the program.

The selection and assignment of individuals who will serve as coaches and mentors to participants is critical to the personal and professional development of participants. How this role is defined, the expectations of the individuals selected to serve in this capacity, and the relationship developed based on structured interactions is vitally important to the success of the leadership pipeline programs. In reality, participants will spend more time with this individual than the fellowship administrator or facilitator.



TELLING OUR STORY

Our Fellowship employed several tools and practices to build a safe and inclusive space for Fellows, including community agreements and network-building activities that were part of each workshop.

Community agreements are a standard practice for Advance CTE meetings. We used this concept to set the expectations with Fellows, and we recommend them at the start of any program meeting or instructional session. Community agreements should:

- Be created collaboratively with all participants. Collaborative ownership encourages vulnerability, engagement and a willingness to learn with one another.
- Help form a brave space for participants. Safe spaces reassure participants who feel anxious about sharing thoughts and feelings regarding sensitive or controversial topics. On the other hand, brave spaces encourage participants to take risks in dialogues focused on difficult topics.



EXAMPLES OF COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS

- Commit to being fully present.
- Assume positive intent and address impact.
- Be receptive, not defensive.
- Honor confidentiality, meaning “stories stay, learning leaves.”
- Take space, make space. Take space by sharing yourself — who you are and your ideas, thoughts and beliefs. Make space by listening deeply and encouraging those who have not taken up space as easily.





RECOMMENDATIONS

Always allow participants to add to the agreements throughout the program.

Following the creation or review of community agreements, a network-building activity allows participants to communicate with each other and strengthen bonds based on shared experiences. This concept differs from “ice breakers” due to the emphasis on a curriculum-centered topic that will allow participants to synthesize information in a group setting. Whether in a small group or the entire group depending on size, collaboratively processing program information and resources builds a sense of reliability among the participants.



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How will you signal to your participants that the program is a brave and safe space?
- How will you model this expectation for your participants?
- Considering your instructional delivery method (virtual or in person), how will those norms influence the creation of your community agreements? Example: Avoid technology distractions or keep your cameras on.

Record your answers in the workbook.

Building trust and community among participants, and creating the tools to do so, are integral to the success of a leadership pipeline program.





MONITORING PROGRESS AND MAKING ADJUSTMENTS

As with all facets of education, being able to make program adjustments based on the needs of the participants or stakeholders or in response to shifting priorities lends credence to the efficiency and effectiveness of the leadership pipeline program. Making adjustments in a timely and responsive manner also requires active program monitoring through feedback loops for all parties involved: participants, administrators of the program, stakeholders, advisory committee members and coaches.



TELLING OUR STORY

The Fellowship required a few adjustments as cohort 1 was completed and cohort 2 was launched.

- **RECRUITMENT PRACTICES FOR COHORT 2:** In response to the lessons learned in year one of the Fellowship, we modified the recruitment and application process for cohort 2 to increase the number of Fellows with extensive postsecondary experience and state CTE leadership-ready resumes and backgrounds. We also enhanced the recruitment process with a video of cohort 1 Fellows briefly explaining why they chose to participate in the Fellowship. The changes to the cohort 2 recruitment and application review process resulted in a 15-member cohort consisting of seven community college professors, administrators and staff members; two four-year university professors and staff members; and six state agency CTE administrators and career readiness specialists.
- **REAL-WORLD PROJECTS:** We committed to publishing the real-world projects completed by Fellows, which required a rigorous review process with multiple checkpoints and draft submissions to Fellowship coaches and the Fellowship lead. The projects are a vital component of the Fellowship and the practical application of the knowledge and skills provided during workshop presentations. The reduced capacity and high turnover rates in education agencies and institutions resulted in Fellows and staff realizing that the desired level of quality was a lofty goal considering their current workloads. In the final three months of the Fellowship, additional one-on-one meetings were scheduled on weekends and during evening hours to ensure that Fellows received the supports needed to deliver quality projects.
- **COACHES:** Keeping coaches connected to the Fellowship is an essential element for improving the quality of the experience for both coaches and Fellows. Additional communication measures were established to increase engagement with coaches, including:
 - Replacing quarterly coaching meetings with bi-monthly one-on-one meetings with each coach;
 - Streamlining and reducing monthly coaching reports with input from coaches to request clear and concise responses on the progress of Fellows;
 - Introducing coaches to Fellows during the kickoff meeting instead of Fellows independently scheduling their first meeting; and
 - Providing coaches workshop summary reports with follow-up post-work discussions initiated by Fellows based on workshop topics and presentations.

We are sharing a few of the lessons learned from the Fellowship with you as a reminder that even with the best plans and supports from experts, adjustments will have to be made to your program to meet the needs of stakeholders and, most importantly, your participants.





GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How frequently and after the completion of which program design elements will you survey participants?
- What additional feedback loops or monitoring strategies will you incorporate to ensure that the program meets the needs of your organization, participants and the community being served?
- Will you conduct a pre-assessment of your advisory committee, coaches and participants to proactively identify unexpected needs or concerns?

Record your answers in the workbook.

Making adjustments in a timely and responsive manner also requires active program monitoring through feedback loops for all parties involved.



A DEEP DIVE INTO PROGRAM ELEMENTS

While your program may not consist of the three components of Advance CTE's Fellowship (workshops, coaching and real-world projects), we wanted to share a bit more about each component. This information may inspire you in your program design. We hope you will borrow or adapt from our work in each of the following areas, which draws upon a vast network of experts:

- [Workshop design and delivery](#);
- [Selection and role of coaches](#); and
- [Real-world projects](#).



Photo credit: Paul Morse





WORKSHOP DESIGN AND DELIVERY

While we identified the need for workshops as part of our original proposal to the ECMC Foundation, we relied heavily on input from our NAC to identify the topics and delivery methods of the workshops. Additional workshop design features were created and facilitated by Advance CTE with support from Education Strategy Group, which drew upon its postsecondary CTE expertise and network. We designed the workshop curriculum to equip Fellows with the knowledge, tools, resources and network to lead a postsecondary state CTE agency or institution with an equity lens.



RECOMMENDATIONS

When developing the CTE leadership pipeline program's curriculum and activities, consider the following:

- The advisory committee can provide CTE leaders with a framework to begin the curriculum design; however, the selection of specific materials and resources will be a task for the CTE leadership team. There are several options to consider:
 - Contracting with a leading CTE organization such as an affiliation organization or a postsecondary institution with a CTE leadership program;
 - Applying the curriculum used in Advance CTE's Fellowship program, which is available in this document in the form of an Annotated Bibliography; or
 - Replicating a state leadership program in your network or a state highlighted in *Advancing Equity in CTE: A Review on the Current State of CTE Leadership Programs and Diversification Efforts*, the second blog in the series about the Fellowship.

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TELLING OUR STORY

A few patterns emerged after we delivered the workshop content for cohort 1. The Fellows' engagement with the workshop material increased as opportunities to share with each other to synthesize the core elements of the workshop materials increased. The [delivery of the workshops](#) included the following essential elements:

- Pre-workshop materials were limited to no more than 90 minutes of total reading time;
- In each workshop, the Fellows revisited the community agreements;
- Building network connections was a consistent activity to allow topic connections and provided Fellows with an opportunity to share insights with each other;
- Concretized learning was also a consistent instructional element to allow for processing time after each presentation and small-group discussions;
- Panel participants and speakers were selected by topic relevance and alignment to workshop objectives, and seeking a diverse speaker on each topic was a priority;
- Group activities such as role play, product creation or responses to scenarios in small-group sessions were used to avoid a “sit and get” instructional strategy in a virtual environment; and
- Each workshop included a virtual whiteboard to collect any lingering questions or requests for more information. The whiteboard was shared with the coaches and addressed by workshop facilitators.



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What will be your preferred delivery method – virtual or in person? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each delivery method for your team and the cohort?
- What instructional strategies do you believe will be the most effective for your targeted audience?
- How will you intentionally build a sense of connectedness or camaraderie among the participants?
- Whom will you work with to develop your workshop curriculum?

Record your answers in the workbook.





SELECTION AND ROLE OF COACHES

A key factor in the success of any leadership pipeline is the selection of the individuals providing aspiring leaders with access to state and local networks, career guidance and personal development. To that end, Advance CTE leveraged coaches to serve a variety of functions for Fellows, including a listening ear, a mentor, an experienced guide, an accountability partner, a network builder, a content expert and a colleague/friend.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Prior to selecting coaches/mentors, the expectations should be clearly defined. Review Advance CTE's Sample Coach [memorandum of understanding](#) (MOU) for a list of recommended expectations and requirements for coaches.

Coaches/mentors should be selected from a pool of trusted individuals from the network of the organization facilitating the CTE leadership pipeline program and the advisory committee. Individuals selected should:

- Have an extensive CTE background in a state, region or local institution;
- Exhibit a desire to give back to the CTE community;
- Have leadership experience;
- Have the time and flexibility to adequately support program participants; and
- Be committed to leading with an equity lens.



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What are the interests of the participant?
- Does the participant have a preference in the coach/mentor assigned to them based on demographics, areas of expertise or experience at specific institutions?
- Does the coach/mentor have a network that could enhance the career aspirations of the assigned participant?

Record your answers in the workbook.





TELLING OUR STORY

For the Advance CTE Fellowship, a successful practice in the recruitment of coaches was to send the potential coach a brief biography of the participant they would be assigned to for the program. This practice increased the success rate of the coach-Fellow pairing and in many instances led to the successful recruitment of the individual to become a coach for the program. In turn, the recruitment of any coach was initiated by reviewing the enrollment survey of the applicant to the program and recruiting coaches based on the preferences Fellows identified in the enrollment survey.



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REAL-WORLD PROJECTS

This element is where the rubber meets the road. As discussed in the Designing Your Program section, participant demonstration of skills and competencies not only engrains the knowledge attained during the leadership program but also allows for the development of a portfolio of the participant's work for future leadership opportunities. For the Advance CTE – ECMCF Fellows, four of the participants from cohort 1 were able to use the completed project as a portion of their applications to doctoral programs.



TELLING OUR STORY

In our Fellowship, the Fellows identified in their Fellowship application a real-world project that aligned to their career progression goals.

Each project and its impact was honed through the support of the Fellow's coach, competency and knowledge gained through the workshops, and the support of the Fellow's peers. Fellows built leadership skills and their professional network, which helped them become better connected to their own community through interviews of colleagues, learners and other stakeholders in their states. At the end of the cohort experience, each Fellow presented their project findings, recommendations and outcomes of any recommendations that had already been implemented to a select group of postsecondary CTE experts.

A Fellow's ability to implement and influence changes to policies, procedures or belief systems based on available or requested data is an important element of adaptive leadership and speaks to a leader's capacity to affect CTE ecosystems. With this in mind, the advisory committee incorporated the selection and development of a real-world project into the Fellowship completion requirements. Fellows completed a 10-page white paper on a marginalized or underserved learner population in their state, region or local institution and examined strategies that would increase these learners' access to and performance in a CTE program. For Fellows to successfully move into postsecondary state leadership positions, a command of the administrative skills required to be an exceptional leader would have to be demonstrated during the Fellowship and potentially used as an example or reference material as aspiring leaders seek out potential opportunities.

To help elevate the work of the Fellows, we selected four real-world projects to be published on the Advance CTE website and used as resource material for the [Elevating Knowledge briefs](#). These briefs provide policy recommendations for state leaders, and by positioning the findings of the Fellows' research as potential action steps for the field, this series aspires to elevate a new and more demographically diverse generation of CTE leaders.



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What skills are you seeking to highlight in the completion of a real-world project? Examples include data analysis, program assessment, equity-minded principles, etc.
- What supports or resources, including data, will be available to fellows to support their real-world project?
- How will you meaningfully promote and elevate the participants' work to increase their visibility and social capital?

Record your answers in the workbook.





POST-PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

While a lot can be accomplished during a fellowship, continuing to elevate and celebrate participants' learnings and successes is critical to keep the momentum going by:

- [Telling the story — capturing success stories;](#)
- [Videos: Journey to CTE leadership video series;](#) and
- [Staying connected.](#)





TELLING THE STORY – CAPTURING SUCCESS STORIES

Sharing the stories and experiences of the individuals who participate in the leadership program is just as important as offering the opportunity to aspiring leaders to participate. Leveraging the social capital of the organization and the advisory committee to share those stories is critical to program success and increasing the visibility of your program participants. Announcing that you have recruited and selected participants is a great first step; however, elevating the successes of the participants also highlights the importance of and activities of the program. This work sets the stage for the recruitment of future coaches, advisory committee members, guest speakers, panelists, industry or community partners, and program participants .



TELLING OUR STORY

Over the course of the Fellowship, Advance CTE conducted interviews with each Fellow, highlighting their stories — and the impact of the Fellowship — in our Learning that Works blog and monthly member newsletter. We also invited the Fellows to participate in our Fall Meeting as speakers and moderators during sessions. And we highlighted Fellows in social media posts (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter).



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What resources are available at your organization to tell the story of the program, such as a highly visible website, an extensive presence on social media platforms, annual convening opportunities, or partners invested in the success of the program that have the resources previously mentioned?
- What are your communications norms with organization stakeholders and the cadence of communications using methods such as newsletters, listserves or software applications that allow your organization to maintain a consistent connection to members, customers or constituents? How frequently do you communicate with potential participants and employers?

Record your answers in the workbook.

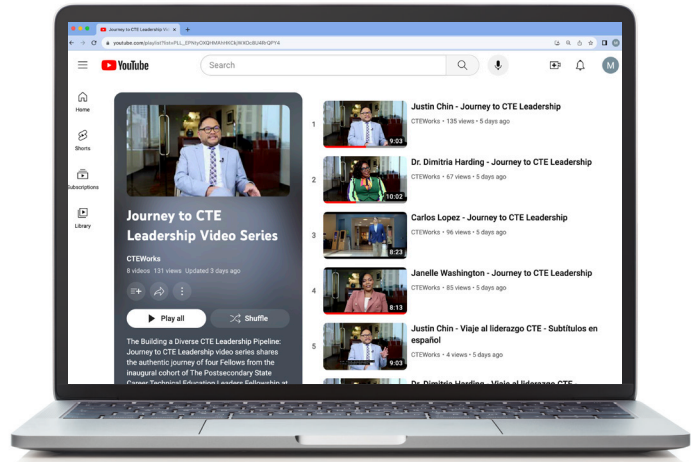




Videos: [Journey to CTE Leadership Video Series](#)

Video testimonials of Fellows who participated in the Fellowships are an invaluable resource provided to CTE leaders in conjunction with this toolkit. The video series serves as a recruitment tool to:

- Share the authentic journey of a diverse group of Fellows on their pathway to state CTE leadership roles in agencies and postsecondary institutions;
- Highlight the reality of the barriers to these positions for individuals from marginalized and underserved populations; and
- Highlight practical and replicable steps, actions and supports for states to strengthen and diversify state leadership pipelines.



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- The videos highlight a diverse group of aspiring state leaders. How can the videos assist you with diversifying CTE leadership in your state?
- The videos focus on postsecondary participants. Do the experiences shared in the video apply to the potential leaders in your state who may not know that a wide array of leadership opportunities are available in CTE?

Record your answers in the workbook.





STAYING CONNECTED

As you select a launch date for your CTE leadership pipeline program, planning with the end in mind by considering what supports will be in place for participants at the end of the program is a prudent step to take.



TELLING OUR STORY

Advance CTE is developing an alumni program for Fellows to meet the following objectives:

- Maintain the connections that Advance CTE – ECMCF Fellows built with one another and Advance CTE during the Fellowship through a formalized alumni network for current Fellows and Fellowship alumni;
- Develop an alumni network that bridges cohorts of the ECMCF Fellowship and provides access to resources and opportunities that will further participants' professional development and foster a greater connection to Advance CTE's membership activities; and
- Create spaces that support the professional development of aspiring and current postsecondary CTE leaders of color to elevate diverse perspectives and influence current Advance CTE programming for CTE leaders.

We will assess the success of this network with the following measures:

- Members of the alumni network report that the resources and networking space are productive and support their professional development;
- Members of the alumni network continue to be connected to Advance CTE and our resources and learning opportunities that expand their knowledge of current promising practices in CTE; and
- Members of the alumni network retain their membership in Advance CTE.



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How do you plan to keep participants connected to your CTE ecosystem after they complete the fellowship?
- What role will participants play in your organization after the program is complete? Examples include advisory committee, coach/mentor, project consultants, liaison, or program recruiter.

Record your answers in the workbook.





ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

The [annotated bibliography](#) is a repository of curated resources derived from the Fellowship workshops that can assist state CTE leaders in building and expanding your knowledge of these competencies. These resources will also support organization-wide or personal professional development in building the competencies necessary to engage in hard but necessary discussions around transforming inequitable systems and policies.

Note: Please review the materials in the annotated bibliography before responding to the following guiding questions, which are also available in the downloadable workbook.





GUIDING QUESTIONS



Phase 1: The objective of the first phase of resources is to build knowledge on the need for equity-minded leadership and the history of the systems and policies that disenfranchise learners. CTE is introduced through an equity lens, with an emphasis on racial equity. Building a baseline knowledge of the historical context surrounding CTE programs and the systems that perpetuated harm against certain learner populations is an important first step in identifying and mitigating the effects of these policies that still affect outcomes today.

- What is your current organization's stance on equity? Can you easily find an equity policy or strategy?
- What are some of the historical barriers to minorities and underserved populations gaining access to high-quality CTE programming in the United States or your current state, region or local community?
- What key levers in your organization can be activated to improve outcomes for learners of color?
- Are you familiar with the Advance CTE resources that are available to assist your organization with transforming inequitable systems?
- After reviewing the videos and articles in Phase 1 and completing the Harvard Implicit Bias Test, what strategies will you emphasize in your leadership program?
- How can your leadership program encourage the use of adaptive and technical solutions to improve equitable access to and the performance in CTE programs for learners of color?

Phase 2: The second phase of resources focuses on building skills to promote equity, collaboration and innovation through data analysis and program evaluation. These resources address the technical skills required for identifying, evaluating and dismantling inequitable systems. Data is a powerful tool by which to initiate the process of developing interventions to close equity gaps in CTE programs and to evaluate policies and practices to assist state and local CTE leaders in advancing more learner-centered career navigation and support structures for marginalized learners. This support can be multi-dimensional, and these resources provide a spectrum of strategies for meeting learners where they are to equip them for success.

- Do you have access to your organization's CTE access or performance data disaggregated by race, ethnicity and gender?
- Emphasizing data-driven decisions, how would you use your organization's data to analyze policies and practices and mitigate inequities?
- How do you define meeting learners where they are, and what steps can be taken to analyze and evaluate their needs related to CTE programming access and performance?
- How does your organization currently support CTE leaders as they complete a Perkins V Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA)?
- How is data disaggregated by subgroups and special populations used in your organization to complete the CLNA?
- What elements of Phase 2 resources will you incorporate in your organization's leadership pipeline?

Phase 3: The final phase of resources emphasizes the importance of sustainability in this work and the role of stakeholders in a cohesive and equitable career preparation ecosystem. Sustaining this work requires potent partnerships to advance and maintain high-quality and equitable CTE.

- Assessing labor market information (LMI) is a vital aspect of determining program quality. How does your organization train CTE leaders and encourage the use of LMI?
- How would you incorporate work-based learning into your leadership program and provide leaders with strategies to equitably expand access for all learners?
- What strategies are currently used in your organization to foster public-private partnerships?
- What are the current elements of your organization's education and training pathways?

Record your answers in the workbook.

While our specific goals for the Fellowship/CTE leadership pipeline program are different from those of your organization because we do not hire State Directors or regional or local CTE leaders, the overarching goal is the same: Ensure that qualified leaders, especially those trained in a specific geographic location, remain in those areas and are ever-ready to answer the call of CTE leadership when opportunities are available. Congratulations on your decision to offer an in-state CTE leadership pipeline program and on taking the necessary and brave steps to emphasize diversity in your recruitment and selection process.





ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The success of the Advance CTE – ECMCF Fellows and the Fellowship in general is attributable to the host of visionary leaders and diligent contributors who provided resources, time and expertise to this endeavor: our generous sponsor [ECMC Foundation](#); former Advance CTE Executive Director Kimberly Green; the NAC; Dr. Debra Bragg; [Education Strategy Group](#); Fellowship consultant, advisory committee member, and coach recruiter Dr. Kumea Shorter-Gooden; the 30 coaches from across the nation in various leadership positions in state postsecondary CTE agencies and postsecondary institutions; guest speakers from national organizations and CTE and workforce agencies; real-world project reviewers; and the Advance CTE staff: Dr. Kevin R Johnson Sr. (Senior Advisor and Fellowship Lead), Amy Hodge (Policy Associate and Fellowship Coordinator), Stacy Whitehouse (Associate Director, Communications), and Jodi Langellotti (Communications Associate).





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