



TAACCCT

TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND CAREER TRAINING
EQUIPPING COMMUNITY COLLEGES FOR SUCCESS



SUSTAINABILITY TOOLKIT

This toolkit is designed to support the sustainability of the programs and innovations developed by grantees through the Department of Labor's Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training program. It has been developed for project managers, directors, and others responsible for implementing and overseeing TAACCCT grants.



EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR



JOBS FOR THE FUTURE

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Department of Labor's Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grant program is a major investment to increase the ability of community colleges to address the challenges of today's workforce. An investment of \$1.9 billion over 4 years, the TAACCCT program is designed to serve a diverse population of workers eligible for training under the TAA for Workers program, as well as a broad range of other adults. There are 256 total TAACCCT grantees, 146 of which represent individual college grants and 110 that lead consortia of between 3 and 15 community colleges. With such a large investment of funds, time, effort, and reach that extends to more than 60 percent of the community colleges in the country, sustainability is an ongoing topic for TAACCCT grantees, employer and workforce system partners, and policymakers.

This toolkit is structured to help you and your planning team consider each of the innovations that have contributed to the success of your project. These innovations can be successful program practices, institutional policies, instructional designs, new staff roles such as navigators—any key innovation that has been created through your grant efforts and that contributed to your success. Once your team has identified and prioritized innovations to sustain or scale, the toolkit will help you develop a plan to ensure that they become a permanent part of how your college/consortium helps students build successful careers.

The toolkit should be used with planning worksheets, which you can find at <https://taaccct.workforcegps.org/>.



DEFINING SUSTAINABILITY

What is sustainability?

Sustainability is the effort to maintain the impact and capacity of programs and innovations. For some, sustainability implies that the program or project will be sustained as it currently is. But the goal of sustainability isn't necessarily to maintain programs as they currently exist, but to maintain key aspects of the impact the program has had. As you work to sustain your efforts past the term of your grant, how you approach your program(s) may change as you consider how best to sustain your efforts' impact on student success and your college's ability to build industry-aligned programs.

For others, sustainability means continuing grant efforts with new sources of funding. It may well be that some program elements require additional funds to sustain, but it's important to recognize the capacity that has been built in terms of strategic innovations such as program designs, instructional innovations, policy changes, and partnerships. These innovations may or may not require additional funds to sustain, but they definitely require thoughtful planning.

How are sustainability and scaling related?

Sustainability usually refers to how something will be continued. Scaling refers to how a successful program or practice will be broadened to affect larger numbers of students—e.g., other programs on your campus or other campuses. The strategy to sustain something may also involve scaling it.

In developing a sustainability plan, grantees should consider how their success will be scaled to impact larger numbers of students. If work-based learning components were critical to the success of students in the TAACCCT-funded manufacturing program, you might seek ways to build work-based learning into more programs. If student progress was accelerated by a revised prior learning assessment (PLA) process, for example, you may focus on making sure that the revised PLA process is available to students in other programs of study. TAACCCT grantees will truly have the greatest impact when they seek out ways to spread successful strategies across the college. The best way to sustain an effective program innovation is to “scale it up” and integrate it into the standard practices of the college, colleges within the consortium, or other community colleges in the state.

Why focus on sustainability?

In any capacity-building effort, there is often an assumption that the capacity that was built will remain past the period of performance. But that is not usually true without conscious focus and planning. Considering what to sustain is the first step. When considering sustainability, grantees may think of deliverables such as new curricula, new programs, and new equipment. But TAACCCT deliverables often include a host of new capacities: new approaches to employer engagement, new ways of supporting students and new methods of instructional design and delivery, among many others, which have been critical to success. All of these can be considered when developing a strategy for sustainability.

Scaling Change

The Transformative Change Initiative at the University of Illinois has developed a set of tools to help community colleges scale their innovations. Based on their [Guiding Principles for Scaling Transformative Change](#), the online tools walk users through several steps including Engaging Leaders, Describing the Innovation, and Using Evidence.¹

1. Office of Community College Research and Leadership. 2016. “Guiding Principles for Scaling Transformative Change.” Available at: <http://occrll.illinois.edu/tci/principles>



Examples of successful sustainability efforts

The chart below includes just a few of the many innovations created across the core elements of TAACCCT, and provides examples of the strategies that grantees have used to sustain those innovations.

SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY Creating a Permanent, For-Credit Offering

TAACCCT Core Elements

Career Pathways / Stacked and Latticed Credentials

Innovation

Embedding industry-recognized credentials in programs of study

Many grantees worked closely with employers and industry associations to embed industry certifications into programs of study. Excellent examples can be found in the work of the Arizona Sun Corridor; Get into Energy Consortium, Florida TRADE, the Institute for Cybersecurity at the Community College of Baltimore County, and Advance Wisconsin, to name just a few. These programs, many designed as stackable certificates, are now aligned with industry requirements and are among the permanent offerings at these colleges.

TAACCCT Core Elements

Career Pathways / Credit for Prior Learning

Innovation

Expanding credit for prior learning

Credit for prior learning is not a new idea, but its use was significantly expanded through TAACCCT, and it has been put to work as a strategy to accelerate the time to completion for adults with prior work experience. In the cases of Colorado, Wisconsin, Louisiana, and others, the prior learning assessment processes put in place to help TAACCCT participants attain their credentials more quickly became the bases for formalized prior learning assessment processes that are now used statewide and made transparent to incoming students.



SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

Creating Registered Apprenticeships

TAACCCT Core Elements

Strategic Alignment with Employers

Transferability and Articulation of Credit

Innovation

Developing work-based learning elements

Many TAACCCT programs developed components for hands-on learning, including internships and on-the-job training. Some TAACCCT grantees like Macomb Community College are sustaining work-based learning components by creating registered apprenticeships, which prepare students for highly skilled positions by incorporating on-the-job training with classroom and practical lab instruction, and participating in the Registered Apprenticeship-College Consortium.

SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

Building a Case for Funding by Showing a Return on Investment

TAACCCT Core Elements

Career Pathways / Student Supports

Strategic Alignment with the Workforce System

Innovation

Adding greater student support

Many TAACCCT colleges have used funds to invest in staff—coaches, navigators, and advisors—who work directly with students to help them map out a career plan, stay on track, and attain a job. At State Fair Community College, Missouri, a member of the MoWINs consortium, TAACCCT staff were able to make the case that the navigator positions led to far higher rates of completion and job attainment, with benefits accruing to the college in the form of enrollments, tuition, and enhanced reputation. As a result, the college has sustained 14 navigators who work at 4 campus sites.



SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY
Adopting New Designs as Permanent Offerings of the College

TAACCCT Core Elements

Online and/or Tech-Enabled Learning

Innovation

Developing new instructional designs

TAACCCT grantees have developed new designs involving modular schedules, online instruction, and competency-based learning, to name just a few. The competency-based programs created at Sinclair, Broward, and Austin Community Colleges have been adopted by each college as permanent models. Each of these CBE programs, which are online and self-paced, have required significant administrative changes affecting registration, financial aid, and other departments, providing models for such changes at other institutions.

SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY
Obtaining Statewide Funding and Adopting Practice Statewide

TAACCCT Core Element

Career Pathways / Accelerated Strategies

Innovation

Redesigned developmental education

Many states built programs under TAACCCT that would ensure that lower-skilled adults had access to college credentials. Approaches include adoption of the I-BEST model, which embeds remediation in technical courses and uses a team teaching model to ensure that students build foundational math and literacy skills as they work toward a college-level credential.² In Louisiana, the I-BEST model has been adopted in colleges across the state. Other colleges used different models of developmental education redesign, such as those in Colorado, which completely redesigned developmental education to reduce the amount of time, developmental credits, and number of courses in the developmental sequence.

2. Washington Community and Technical Colleges. 2016. "Integrated Basic Education Skills Training (I-BEST)," Available at: <https://www.sbctc.edu/colleges-staff/programs-services/i-best/>

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

The questions and the examples in each worksheet on the following pages will help to guide your planning team through a process that includes analyzing your progress, identifying opportunities to sustain and scale key elements of success, and developing a full sustainability work plan. The Sustainability Toolkit should be used with the [accompanying worksheets](#) and/or used at a planning retreat or series of meetings that involve people from across departments within a college and/or across a consortium.³

Sustainability planning for consortia can be a two-phase process: each college within the consortium can consider what to sustain and how to scale key elements of the project within their college. At the same time, college representatives from across the consortium can consider together what to sustain and how to scale efforts consortium-wide.

Getting started

There is no perfect time to begin this planning, but the advice of Rounds 1 and 2 grantees is the sooner you start, the better. If you are a Round 4 grantee, you can begin the process and revisit it later to refine your plan as successful strategies that should be sustained emerge. Implementing your project with sustainability and scaling in mind increases the chance that it will be sustained and scaled.

3. Jobs for the Future. 2016. "TAACCCT Sustainability Toolkit". Available at: https://taaccct.workforcegps.org/resources/2016/07/25/13/22/Resource_TAACCCTSustainabilityToolkit

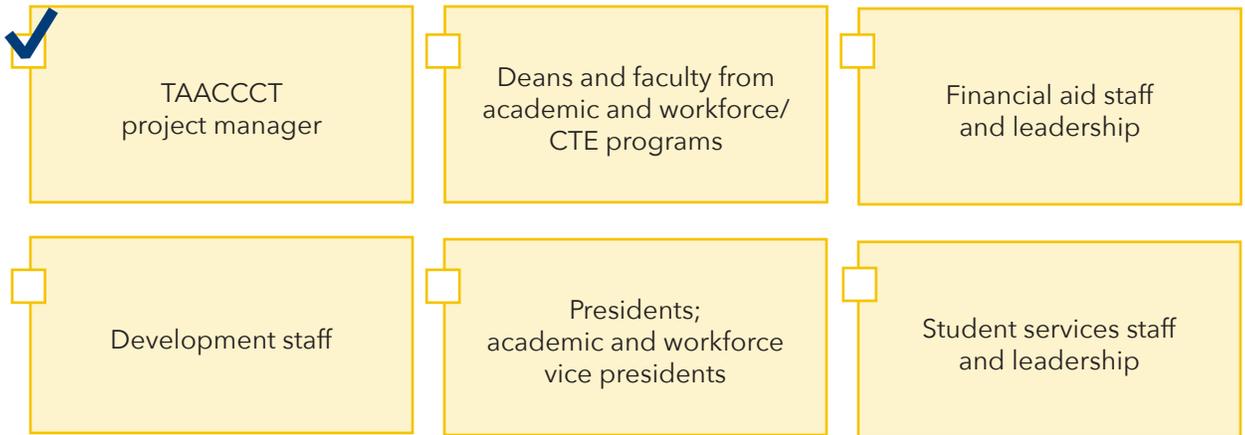


STEP 1

Who should be on your planning team?

It is important to engage a broad team in the planning process—grant staff, senior leadership, faculty, deans, student services staff, and others should all be included in discussions about sustainability. You should also consider which external partners should be part of the planning team. In addition, if senior leadership—including the college president and vice presidents—are not currently involved in your planning, consider how you can begin to engage them now or down the road as you continue your sustainability efforts. Their involvement and support will be key to long-term sustainability. Individuals you may want on your planning team might include:

Internal members of the college



External members



**STEP
2**

How is your TAACCCT vision aligned with the strategic priorities of the institution, the state, and other community college reform efforts?

Make sure that everyone on the planning team is aware of all of the programs, program components, major partnerships, innovations, and strategies of your TAACCCT project. Walk through your statement of work with your planning team, noting what your project is working toward under each of the TAACCCT core elements. Then note how they are aligned with other strategic priorities that guide the work of your college. Consider both college-level priorities and the statewide priorities established for higher education. Also consider how your innovations are aligned with the workforce investment system in your area and its work to implement the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The reason for this step is that innovations that support a broader agenda have a greater likelihood of being sustained. And understanding what is aligned with the broader strategic priorities will help reveal sustainability strategies.

With your full project in mind, ask yourselves these questions:

- A** How does our work fit into the overall institutional vision for meeting the career needs of students and workforce needs of employers?
- B** Has a vision been articulated by the higher education system in our state, by the governor, by the legislature, or by others that aligns with our work?
- C** What is the vision of the Workforce Development Board for WIOA implementation, and how does that align with our TAACCCT work?
- D** What have we done that can contribute to or expand our college/state/consortium's vision for industry-aligned programs and adult learners that have been informed by the project?
- E** What specific innovations, strategies, and approaches are central to the vision?



STEP
2

Next, turn to the chart below

- 1 Review the example in the chart below. Then, turn to the [Step 2 worksheet](#).⁴
- 2 For each innovation, indicate the strategic priority(ies) that it is aligned with. Remember to include any that apply from your college, the higher education system, and the workforce system.

TAACCT CORE ELEMENT
Career Pathways with Stacked or Latticed Credentials

Successful Innovation

Alignment with
Strategic Priorities

Example: New certifications that stack to associate's degrees in manufacturing (Strategy I, Activity I from the Quarterly Narrative Progress Report (QNPR))

Example: The college's goal to create shorter-term credentials in response to industry needs

4. Jobs for the Future. 2016. "TAACCT Sustainability Toolkit". Available at: https://taacct.workforcegps.org/resources/2016/07/25/13/22/Resource_TAACCTSustainabilityToolkit



STEP 2

TAACCCT CORE ELEMENT
Strategic Alignment with Workforce System and Other Stakeholders

Successful Innovation

Example: Shared intake processes so all students are screened for workforce system eligibility and all students are aware of workforce system services

Alignment with Strategic Priorities

Example: Governor’s goal of aligning higher education and workforce system resources

TAACCCT CORE ELEMENT
Transferability and Articulation of Credit

Successful Innovation

Example: Statewide articulation policy between all community colleges and the state’s public four-year institutions

Alignment with Strategic Priorities

Example: State higher education system’s goal to improve the transfer process from community colleges to four-year colleges/universities

TAACCCT CORE ELEMENT
Technology-Enabled Learning

Successful Innovation

Example: Online and blended courses that were developed through TAACCCT will be expanded to programs of study beyond TAACCCT

Alignment with Strategic Priorities

Example: College’s goal to increase accessibility and completions for adult working students



**STEP
3**

What has had the greatest impact on your success?

Demonstrating your success through data is a critical part of sustainability. In order to make a case that your innovations should be sustained you must be able to show—to senior officials at your college, faculty, others in the higher education system, partners in the workforce system, employers, and others—that the innovations that have been created through TAACCCT have had an impact.

Think about the data, both quantitative and qualitative, that you have available to help determine where your success has been and what has contributed to your success. Then think about the data you wish you had that could help you show your success.

Remember, you’re not just sustaining “the program.” When you consider your successes, don’t simply think in terms of the program(s) that has been created. Each program contains multiple innovations that may have contributed to its success and that require attention to sustain. So, for example, as you consider sustaining a project that developed a computer numeric control machining program, break the program apart to consider all of its innovations: the instructional methods that were developed, the relationship with the employer, the navigators, the updated equipment, the way that developmental education was integrated into the program, the curriculum, and the stackable credentialing model. These components will become the innovations that you will examine to determine what makes the most sense to sustain and/or to scale to affect students in other programs of study.

As your team discusses the innovations you believe have had the greatest impact, ask yourselves these questions:

- What does the data tell us about programs and program innovations that have had the greatest impact?
- What have been our “ripple effects”—unintended impacts or spin-off efforts?
- Are there innovations that we believe have been successful, but we need more data to support them?

Quantitative data

Qualitative data

Participant outcomes from the Annual Performance Report (APR) (e.g., completions, employment)	Partner feedback (employers, workforce system staff)
Number of students receiving coaching	Student feedback
Data on deliverables from QNPR	Faculty observations
Interim evaluation report	Third-party evaluator observations

STEP
3

Next, turn to the chart on the next page

- 1 Review the example in the chart on the next page. Then, turn to the [Step 3 worksheet](#).⁵
- 2 For each innovation, indicate how you know it's successful in the second column. What data points (qualitative or quantitative) do you currently have that demonstrate success? Are there any you would like to collect to show your success that you don't currently have?
- 3 In the third column, indicate the source of that data (e.g., APR, QNPR, third-party evaluation, interviews of faculty or employers, etc.). If there is data you would like to collect, include what the data source would be, and note how you plan to collect it.

What if data doesn't exist for a specific element?

In many cases, you may not have data that demonstrate the impact of specific innovations you've implemented as part of your TAACCCT grant. Most of your quantitative data may indicate success for the whole program (e.g., a 95 percent completion rate). At that point, you will have to ask yourselves how you know which element contributed to that success: Was it a new instructional method? The fact that each student had a coach? Something else? You may not know exactly what the success factor(s) was/were. That's where your qualitative data can provide some insight. Talk to faculty, students, and others to hear their observations: What do faculty say about how this experience has been different from previous classes? What do students say? And importantly, what do your third party evaluator's data and observations contribute to your understanding of your project and its impact?

TAACCCT CORE ELEMENTS⁶

Evidence-based designs

Career pathways with stacked or latticed credentials

Strategic alignment of the workforce system and other stakeholders

Sector strategies and employer engagement

Transferability and articulation of credit

Online and technology-enabled learning

5. Jobs for the Future. 2016. "TAACCCT Sustainability Toolkit". Available at: https://taaccct.workforcegps.org/resources/2016/07/25/13/22/Resource_TAACCCTSustainabilityToolkit

6. These core elements are common for all Rounds 2–4. Specific language and how they are described is slightly different in each round, but the language here captures the commonalities across rounds. "Transferability and Articulation of Credit" was a core element of Round 3 only, but has been a focus for grantees of other rounds as well. Alignment with other TAACCCT projects was also a core element but was not included as part of sustainability planning. To access the Braided Funding Toolkit produced by Jobs for the Future, log on to <http://application.jff.org/>. Click on "Request Access" next to "Accelerating Opportunity Braided Funding." Click on the link for "Accelerating Opportunity Braided Funding." Click "Log In" in the top right corner and then click on "click here to register."



STEP
3

TAACCCT CORE ELEMENT
Career Pathways with Stacked or Latticed Credentials

Successful Innovation	Data Points that Demonstrate Success	Data Source
<i>Example:</i> New certifications that stack to associate's degrees in manufacturing (Strategy I, Activity I from the QNPR)	<i>Example:</i> Number of student completions in new certifications and employment	<i>Example:</i> APR

TAACCCT CORE ELEMENT
Strategic Alignment with Workforce System and Other Stakeholders

Successful Innovation	Data Points that Demonstrate Success	Data Source
<i>Example:</i> Shared intake processes so all students are screened for workforce system eligibility and all students are aware of workforce system services	<i>Example:</i> Number of TAACCCT participants who are also registered at the One-Stop Center; number of TAACCCT participants that are eligible for Trade Adjustment Assistance and other workforce system programs	<i>Example:</i> One-Stop data; APR

TAACCCT CORE ELEMENT
Sector Strategies and Employer Engagement

Successful Innovation	Data Points that Demonstrate Success	Data Source
<i>Example:</i> The Business Industry Leadership Team developed for manufacturing will be continued and expanded to IT programs	<i>Example:</i> Employer commitments of internships and jobs have increased; employer satisfaction with graduates has increased	<i>Example:</i> Employer interviews; data from internships and career offices regarding internships and jobs from key employers in the industry before and after the program



STEP 3

TAACCCT CORE ELEMENT
Transferability and Articulation of Credit

Successful Innovation	Data Points that Demonstrate Success	Data Source
<i>Example:</i> Statewide articulation policy between all community colleges and the state’s public four-year institutions	<i>Example:</i> State policy on articulation	<i>Example:</i> State policy issuances

TAACCCT CORE ELEMENT
Technology-Enabled Learning

Successful Innovation	Data Points that Demonstrate Success	Data Source
<i>Example:</i> Online and blended courses that were developed through TAACCCT will be expanded to programs of study beyond TAACCCT	<i>Example:</i> Students are enrolling and completing hybrid courses	<i>Example:</i> APR




STEP
4

What mechanisms will you use to sustain your innovations?

In this step, you will consider how you will sustain/scale the innovations you have identified previously. For each innovation that you want to sustain based on evidence of success (Step 3), and its alignment with other strategic priorities (Step 2), identify the specific mechanism or strategy you may be able to use to sustain it. Make sure the mechanism is as concrete as possible. Here are some examples:

- Create a new policy at our college
- Implement new protocols
- Build it into faculty professional development
- Support it within the college budget
- Codify the partnership through a memorandum of understanding (MOU)
- Advocate for a statewide policy
- Restructure college programs and offices to eliminate "silos"
- Identify additional funding

Finally, ask yourselves, are there other mechanisms that can be used?

Next, turn to the chart below

Review the example below. Then, in the [Step 4 worksheet](#) list in the left-hand column the innovations you have decided to sustain, and, in the right-hand column, the mechanisms you will use to sustain them.⁷

Innovation to Sustain

Mechanism(s) to Sustain It

Example: Shared intake processes so all students are screened for workforce system eligibility and all students are aware of workforce system services

Example: MOU between college and One-Stop Career Center; Training for all staff in admissions and the registrar's office, and appropriate staff at the One-Stop Career Center

**STEP
5**

What might require additional funding?

Some of the innovations that will be sustained, and the mechanisms for sustaining them, will require additional funding. For example, elements that might require additional funding include student support staff, faculty who have been paid to teach non-credit courses, or a subscription service for a tool to analyze the labor market with real-time labor market information. For these cases, the strategies below will help grantees consider what those funding sources might be. Several TAACCCT grants have used [return on investment \(ROI\) tools](#) to help build the case to college leadership that exists for innovations that have led to higher rates of student retention, completion, and employment.⁸

As you assess these costs, you may consider one of the following strategies to sustain that element:

A**Restructure existing staff roles so that they include the practices and strategies developed by TAACCCT-funded staff.**

For example, if you have hired an employer liaison with TAACCCT funds as part of your project, consider how the activities of that individual could be built into the role of other college staff. If the strategies and methods for employer engagement are built into the roles of other staff, such as career services staff, deans, or faculty, those employer engagement strategies will be sustained beyond the life of the grant, and may be scaled to other programs in other industries.

B

Restructure the program so that its costs can be covered by tuition. Some colleges have chosen to redesign non-credit programs as credit bearing so that students would be eligible for financial aid. Mott College in Michigan has been able to access Pell grants for income-eligible, non-credit students by adopting the alternative “clock hours” [method of calculating financial aid](#).⁹

C

Build cost-sharing alternatives with partners. Colleges in Massachusetts are sharing the costs of Help Wanted Online, a real-time labor market tool, with the state’s workforce system and local One-Stop Centers. In Missouri, costs of the navigators are being shared between the colleges and the One-Stop Career Centers.

D

Develop a “braided funding” strategy to secure additional funds.¹⁰ Colleges have found creative ways to combine funding sources to support workforce priorities. The Braided Funding Toolkit can help colleges develop their approach.

E

Make a case that the cost should be absorbed into the college budget by documenting a return on investment. Some grantees have begun to calculate an ROI to build a case that the college should continue to fund services and positions that increase student retention, such as the navigators from the Missouri example at the bottom of page 5. They have created an [ROI tool](#) that helps calculate the specific return in terms of tuition revenue for those services that result in increases in student retention or other quantifiable benefits to the college.¹¹

8, 11. Jobs for the Future. 2016. “TAACCCT Sustainability Toolkit”. Available at:

https://taaccct.workforcegps.org/resources/2016/07/25/13/22/Resource_TAACCCTsustainabilityToolkit

9. Altstadt, D. 2016. *The Power of Pell: Mott Community College’s Use of Federal Aid to Train Unemployed Workers and Dissolve Silos Between Credit and Noncredit*. Washington, DC: The Aspen Institute. Available at: <http://www.aspenwsi.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/Promising-Practices-The-Power-of-Pell.pdf>

10. To access the Braided Funding Toolkit produced by Jobs for the Future, log on to <http://application.jff.org/>. Click on “Request Access” next to “Accelerating Opportunity Braided Funding.” Click on the link for “Accelerating Opportunity Braided Funding.” Click “Log In” in the top right corner and then click on “click here to register.”




STEP
6

Your sustainability work plan

Now you are ready to develop your sustainability work plan. Review the examples in the chart below. Then use the [Step 6 worksheet](#) to develop your plans to sustain the innovations you listed in Step 4.¹² Work through the chart to get as concrete and specific as possible regarding the specific action steps you will need to develop the mechanism/strategy that you decided (in Step 4) you need to develop to sustain each innovation.

Remember, each innovation is likely to take several action steps. Be sure to consider who you need to engage and how you are going to secure the support of senior leadership. Do you need to build a case that the innovation is something that the college should adopt as policy? How will you make that case? All of those questions should be answered through your action-step development.

Innovation #1

Shared intake processes so all students are screened for workforce system eligibility and are aware of workforce system services

Mechanism/Strategy to Sustain it (from Step 4)	Action Steps Required	Person in the Lead	Completion Date
<i>Example:</i> MOU between college and One-Stop Career Center; staff training	<i>Example:</i> Hold meeting of leads from college and One-Stop Center; draft MOU describing process; obtain signatures; design and hold staff training at both institutions	<i>Example:</i> Director of workforce development	

CONCLUSION

The process of designing a sustainability plan isn't linear. Begin the process early and review over time the innovations that you had flagged as keys to success. Pay attention to new opportunities that emerge, as well as what else is happening at the college, and revisit your work plan to update it as your sustainability effort moves along. Grantees that plan and implement their grants with sustainability and scaling in mind throughout will have far greater success in leveraging grant capacity to the fullest, to make truly lasting and transformative change that will improve outcomes for unemployed workers and adult learners far into the future.

This toolkit is available at
<https://taaccct.workforcegps.org/>.

Prepared for the U.S. Department of Labor,
Employment and Training Administration,
by Jobs for the Future under contract
DOL-ETA-14-C-0034.



EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR



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