Centers of Excellence
Playbook

CITY COLLEGES® OF CHICAGO

AIR® Advancing Evidence. Improving Lives.

PROMISE Center
Promoting Resilience, Opportunity, and Mobility in Support of Equity

Introduction

City Colleges of Chicago (CCC) is committed to providing Chicagoans with pathways to economic mobility through industry-aligned career education programs at each college's Center of Excellence (COE). CCC has embarked on a transformative journey to define and elevate the COE model and organizational structure to meet the diverse needs of Chicago employers and residents. This playbook has been developed to support COEs in their planning, implementation, and ongoing operations to ensure that each COE reaches its full potential, advances equity, and maximizes its community impact.

Informed by District, college, and industry stakeholders, this playbook articulates a strategic framework underpinned by four foundational pillars: ***Leadership and Vision; Industry Engagement and Curriculum Alignment; Equitable Student Access, Recruitment, and Outcomes;*** and ***Measurement, Assessment, and Continuous Improvement***. Each of these foundational pillars comprises elements critical to successful implementation of the COE model and includes guidance, required actions, and an accountability structure to achieve identified COE performance standards.

Collectively, the four pillars lay out a roadmap that is essential for the sustainable growth and development of the COEs.

1. **Leadership & Vision** | Leadership and vision are foundational to the success of each COE. At both the District and college levels, leadership is vital in championing the COE vision, mission, and values. This leadership provides important elements to guide COEs toward their objectives, foster collaboration with industry, facilitate accountability, and shape the future of the COE model. Regular meeting cadences ensure alignment and accountability, and COEs define essential roles and functions for success.

2. **Industry Engagement & Curriculum Alignment** | Collaboration among COEs and industry partners plays a pivotal role in developing programs that lead to life-changing outcomes for students and the community. COE leaders, staff, and faculty must work closely with industry experts to ensure that curricula align with the evolving needs of the labor market. This alignment is achieved through various elements, including labor market data analysis, structured industry interaction, regional partnerships, and industry-knowledgeable faculty and staff.

3. **Equitable Student Access, Recruitment, & Outcomes** | COEs play a critical role in ensuring equitable student success by fostering radical inclusion and providing diverse learner populations with access to high-quality, industry-focused education. This comprehensive approach aims to promote economic mobility, ensuring that all students can access in-demand training, gain the skills needed for living-wage careers, and contribute to a more diverse and inclusive workforce. Within the broader framework of student success across CCC, COEs must provide access to career exploration, career transition support, and data-driven strategies that lead to positive student outcomes.

4. **Measurement, Assessment, & Continuous Improvement** | Accountability and continuous improvement are key to achieving COE model success. Clear goals, accountability measures, and key performance indicators (KPIs) create mutually understood definitions of success and ensure alignment across the entire CCC system. Transparent accountability and reporting processes facilitate ongoing assessment of COE performance and support COEs in creating a culture of continuous improvement that can adapt to evolving student and industry needs.

The four sections of this playbook, organized by pillar, provide actionable guidance for COEs to assist them in prioritizing resources, implementing key strategies to align with industry for excellent student outcomes, and measuring success.

PILLAR 1

Leadership & Vision

District and college leadership champion the Center of Excellence (COE) vision, mission, values, and framework and provide necessary strategies, implementation supports, and consistent messaging to staff and faculty to support quality COE program delivery to students and industry.

- Vision and Mission Alignment
- Empowered System
- Clear Expectations and Accountability Structures
- Equity and Economic Mobility-Focused Strategy
- Resource Prioritization

PILLAR 2

Industry Engagement, & Curriculum Alignment

COE leaders, staff, and faculty are knowledgeable about the nuances of the regional economy, labor market, and skill needs, especially for their industries of focus. COEs build relationships with employer leaders, industry associations, and workforce partners for leveraging industry expertise to align programming and curriculum to industry needs, ensuring that students gain the knowledge, skills, abilities, and credentials required for in-demand careers.

- Industry-Informed Curriculum
- Structured Industry Leadership and Involvement
- Regional Partnerships
- Industry-Knowledgeable Staff and Faculty
- Dual Customers and Incentives

PILLAR 3

Equitable Student Access, Recruitment, & Outcomes

COEs conduct intentional recruitment and onboarding and provide ongoing support to ensure equitable and informed access to high-quality, industry-focused programming that leads to successful completion, credential attainment, and employment outcomes for a diverse audience of learners.

- Career-Focused Program Exploration
- Career Seeking, Transition, and Follow-Up Support
- Data-Driven Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Strategies

PILLAR 4

Measurement, Assessment, & Continuous Improvement

City Colleges of Chicago establishes clear goals, accountability measures, and COE key performance indicators for COEs to monitor and assess progress in implementing their mission, vision, values, and framework. A culture of regular assessment and continuous improvement is established and supported to respond to changing student and industry needs.

- Data Tracking Systems and Processes
- Regular Customer Feedback Mechanisms
- Measured Success and Accountability

PILLAR 1

Leadership & Vision

District and college leadership champion the COE mission, vision, values, and COE Framework and provide necessary strategies, implementation supports, and consistent messaging to staff and faculty to support quality COE program delivery to students and industry.

Element 1a: Vision & Mission Alignment | COEs determine a vision and mission for their industry area of focus that serve students and employers and align with the overall vision and mission of CCC.

Element 1b: Empowered System | District and college leadership, staff, and faculty are empowered to execute the COE Framework.

Element 1c: Clear Expectations & Accountability Structures | District and college leadership provide clear expectations and hold all faculty and staff accountable for meeting COE KPIs and results.

Element 1d: Equity & Economic Mobility-Focused Strategy | District and college leadership establish, champion, and implement policies, procedures, and activities that lead to equitable access to and outcomes of COE programming.

Element 1e: Resource Prioritization | District and college leadership support COE programming through the alignment and prioritization of budgets and other resources.

Leadership plays a crucial role for the COEs as it sets the tone, direction, and vision for the success of the system. Skilled leaders model essential behaviors, such as collaboration, effective communication, and innovation, that drive toward key outcomes for CCC, individual colleges, students, and the local economy. Leaders at every level must embrace the vision and mission of the COE model and understand the specific role they play in advancing COE objectives.

District Leadership

District leadership plays a fundamental part in setting the tone for the Centers of Excellence. This leadership begins with establishing and communicating a clear vision and mission for the COEs that align with the broader goals of CCC and the needs of students by connecting programming with local industry needs.

Furthermore, District leadership will foster collaboration and partnerships among colleges, industry representatives, and other community stakeholders. The District will serve in a capacity-building role by providing ongoing technical assistance; professional development opportunities; and opportunities for knowledge sharing, resource pooling, and collaborative problem solving. The District also will provide access to important data and industry-relevant information.

Finally, the District will serve in an accountability role, holding both itself and COE leadership accountable for agreed-upon metrics and outcomes. By promoting a culture of continuous improvement and innovation, the District Office can ensure that all COEs are equipped to deliver high-quality and relevant training to meet the needs of students and high-demand industry sectors.

Biannual COE Meetings

The District Office will convene biannual COE meetings to ensure alignment across all COEs and to foster clear communication.

Purpose	The purpose of this meeting is for District, college, and COE leadership to continue to communicate the COE purpose and vision, discuss strategy, share challenges and best practices across COEs, and reinforce accountability through shared reporting.
Frequency	Biannually
Organizer	Chancellor
Attendees	Chancellor, Provost COE Team, Presidents, COE Deans
Agenda	The agenda will engage all COE leaders in discussion: • Review performance progress, successes, and challenges; • Identify gaps in the labor market and programming; and • Share COE challenges and discuss best practices.

COE LEADERSHIP

While District leadership sets the vision for the COE model, individual college and COE leadership carry out that vision to realize the benefits for each college, its students, and the local economy. COEs provide leadership in a multitude of ways, but the sections below provide guidance on the minimum standards related to the structure and necessary functions within the COE, as well as the process and structure for networking COE programming across colleges.

Structure

While each college can determine how its COE will be staffed and structured, specific roles and functions are integral to the successful operation of the COE and must be carried out as part of the COE. This may mean appointing full-time staff to a role, or it may mean that someone in an existing position is appointed to carry out the necessary functions and duties. Regardless of how a college decides its COE will be structured, this staffing plan should be determined and detailed in writing as part of the COE's Annual Plan and addressed during the Annual Progress Review between each College President and the Chancellor.

The following roles and/or functions are required for each COE.

Role of College President	The role of each President is to lead their College's COE to achieve the overall vision of the model as well as the required COE KPIs. The College President succeeds in this role by serving as CCC's top expert on his/her college's COE industry trends, skill needs, and engagement strategy. College Presidents are also responsible for prioritizing their resources to ensure full COE staffing and quality and innovative programming that is informed by and designed to meet industry needs.
Dean *Full-time position*	At a minimum, each COE must have a full-time Dean who has industry and education expertise and can be held accountable for the evaluation of programs, expansion of COE programming, and development of employer and partner relationships. The Dean sets the vision for the COE, defines strategy, and is responsible for ensuring the COE is effectively engaging employers. The Dean cannot be the only person responsible for the operations and functions of the COE.
Day-to-Day Functional Responsibilities *Must be covered by someone other than the Dean*	Each COE must clearly designate a person other than the Dean to execute the day-to-day functions of the Center. Where the Dean's role is meant to be strategic and focused on building relationships with employers and in the community, day-to-day functional responsibilities may include scheduling, managing faculty and student concerns, compliance activities, managing equipment, professional development of faculty teaching COE programming, and data collection and reporting. These functions need not be covered by a single person or office, but they must be covered by someone other than the COE Dean to ensure bandwidth for the strategic work that will grow and strengthen the COE.
Academic Advisors	Each COE must have academic advisors who are knowledgeable about the COE industries and career pathways as well as the internal academic programming. In many cases, it will make sense to assign specific academic advisors who work exclusively on COE programs. In other cases, academic advisors may support both COE programs and non-COE programs. However, all academic advisors must have specialized knowledge about COE industry-specific programming. Note that academic advisors must participate in COE Sector Meetings.
Work-Based Learning *Must be covered by someone other than the Dean*	An identified staff person must be responsible for connecting students to quality work-based learning (WBL) programs and related staff. WBL opportunities should be relevant to the COE industry and should meet the requirements below, in alignment with the definition used by the CCC WBL team. The COE will track Student Experiences as WBL experiences when they: • Provide real-world insight and involvement in a specific industry, • Support the development and demonstration of relevant employability and technical skills, and • Provide aligned training and tasks to the industry.

Career Services *Must be covered by someone other than the Dean*	An identified staff person must be responsible for connecting students to quality career service programming that includes access to and coaching about labor market information (LMI) and career pathway information.
Recruitment *Must be covered by someone other than the Dean*	An identified staff person(s) must be responsible for recruiting students into and engaging them in COE programming specifically. This may include working directly with students as well as partnering with other organizations, such as associations, partner training institutions, and workforce development partners.
Data *Functional*	An identified staff person must be responsible for gathering and presenting data related to COE programming and outcomes. It is not intended that this be a full-time position, but rather, the identified staff person should work with college researchers and the data and analysis team.

Networking COE Programming

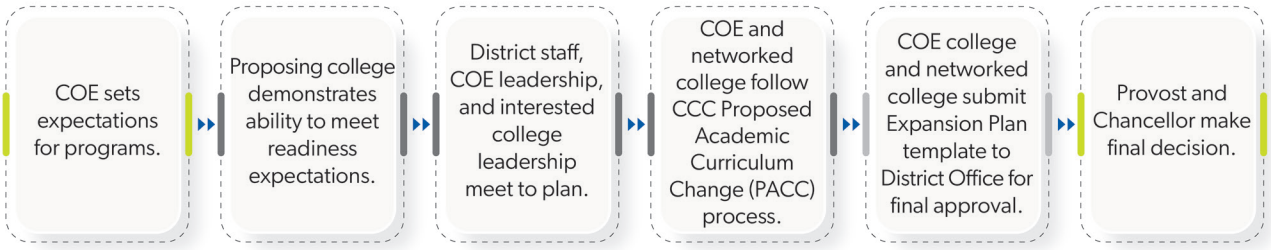
COEs provide sectoral leadership across CCC. Where in-demand training programs connected to a specific COE may be offered, or "networked," across other colleges to provide greater access for students or to fill demand that a single college cannot meet, the COE tasked with that sector will provide leadership across CCC in employer engagement, programming, and continuous improvement related to that sector.

Initial Expansion of Existing Programming

The process for expanding existing COE programming across other colleges is outlined below.

1. The COE sets clear readiness expectations for their programs across several areas. These readiness expectations, listed below, are set in advance and as new programs are proposed.
    a. Data indicating additional student/employer demand
    b. Staffing capacity/expertise
    c. Equipment/facilities
    d. Mitigation plans for potential risks (e.g., How will you ensure you have enough clinical partners or provide necessary equipment for the specified program?)
    e. Accreditation
2. The proposing college demonstrates the ability and commitment to meet readiness expectations, including providing a long-term operating budget.
3. District staff, COE leadership, and interested college leadership meet to discuss and plan and will bring in the Advisory Council at the appropriate time.
4. The COE and the networked college follow the CCC Proposed Academic Curriculum Change (PACC) process of program approval.

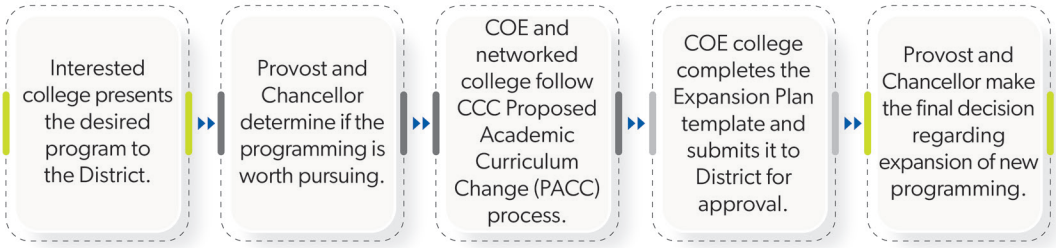
5. The COE college and the newly networked college collaborate to complete the Expansion Plan template and submit it to the District for approval.
6. The Provost and the Chancellor hold final decision-making authority.



Initial Expansion of New Programming Related to a COE

The process for starting a new program that is not currently offered by a COE but falls under the umbrella of an existing COE's industry is outlined below.

1. The interested college presents the desired program to the District with supporting documentation:
    a. Data indicating student/employer demand and other documentation supporting the need
    b. Staffing capacity/expertise required
    c. Equipment/facilities
    d. Accreditation
2. The Provost and the Chancellor determine if the programming is, in fact, related to another college's existing COE and is worth pursuing.
3. If the programming is determined to be connected to an existing COE, the District will convene the COE leadership and interested college leadership to discuss and make the appropriate plans. This team will bring in the Advisory Council at the appropriate time.
4. The COE and the networked college follow the CCC Proposed Academic Curriculum Change (PACC) process of program approval.
5. The COE college completes the Expansion Plan template and submits it to the District for approval.
6. The Provost and the Chancellor make the final decision regarding expansion of new programming.



Ongoing Networking Responsibilities

Managing strategic collaboration across an industry and our college system is complicated. It is important for colleges to understand their roles and responsibilities when programming is networked to other locations beyond the relevant COE college. Those roles are delineated at a high level below.

COE College

As the leader in the COE's priority sector, COEs will assume the primary lead in all industry and employer convenings. This will not preclude networked colleges from engaging with industry—in particular, with employers in close proximity to their college on issues related to students, such as student placement or quality control issues—but engagement should be communicated to the COE college to ensure coordination. The COE leadership and staff will be responsible for convening industry to gain understanding and share information related to the labor market and emerging needs in the industry and will take the lead in aligning curricula to meet current industry needs to best serve CCC students upon completion. The COE also will be responsible for convening and meeting with the Advisory Council, who will serve COE programs across all networked programming.

One way of disseminating this information will be through ongoing Sector Meetings, convened by COE staff, across all networked colleges to share information, discuss sector-related challenges, and brainstorm best practices and solutions. See ***Pillar 2: Industry Engagement & Curriculum Alignment*** for more on COE Sector Meetings.

Networked College

All networked COE programming will follow COE Sector Meeting structure for communication and feedback loops. Networked colleges will be responsible for sharing information and coordinating communication as outlined in the coordination agreement made at initial expansion. While networked colleges certainly will interact with employers through potential events, WBL experiences, and more, they should proactively share new and relevant industry and employer information with the COE and other networked colleges.

This networked COE programming will fall under the COE KPIs, but the data also will be disaggregated to allow for analysis of COE programming by colleges to ensure networked programming is meeting the agreed-upon KPIs.

Implementation Evidence

- COE staffing chart, including position and/or functional descriptions and performance standards, as well as documentation of academic advisors' industry expertise
- Biannual COE Meetings schedule, agendas, and notes
- COE Sector Meetings schedule, agendas, and notes
- Completed Expansion Plan template that addresses items 1–6 in the corresponding section above

PILLAR 2

Industry Engagement & Curriculum Alignment

COE leaders, staff, and faculty are knowledgeable about the nuances of the regional economy, labor market, and skill needs, especially in their industries of focus. Partnerships are developed with knowledgeable industry and workforce ecosystem partners to leverage their experience and connections.

Element 2a: Industry-Informed Curriculum | COE leadership, faculty, and staff have consistent access to relevant labor market and industry data and engage in ongoing analysis and use of these data to shape curricula design, career exploration, and WBL strategies that result in the skills and credentials required for student attainment of good jobs.

Element 2b: Structured Industry Leadership & Involvement | COEs use a structured process and coordinated communication to engage industry leadership in regular conversation to validate labor market data and learn about industry talent/skill needs and trends, current and potential programming, relevant curricula, and WBL needs.

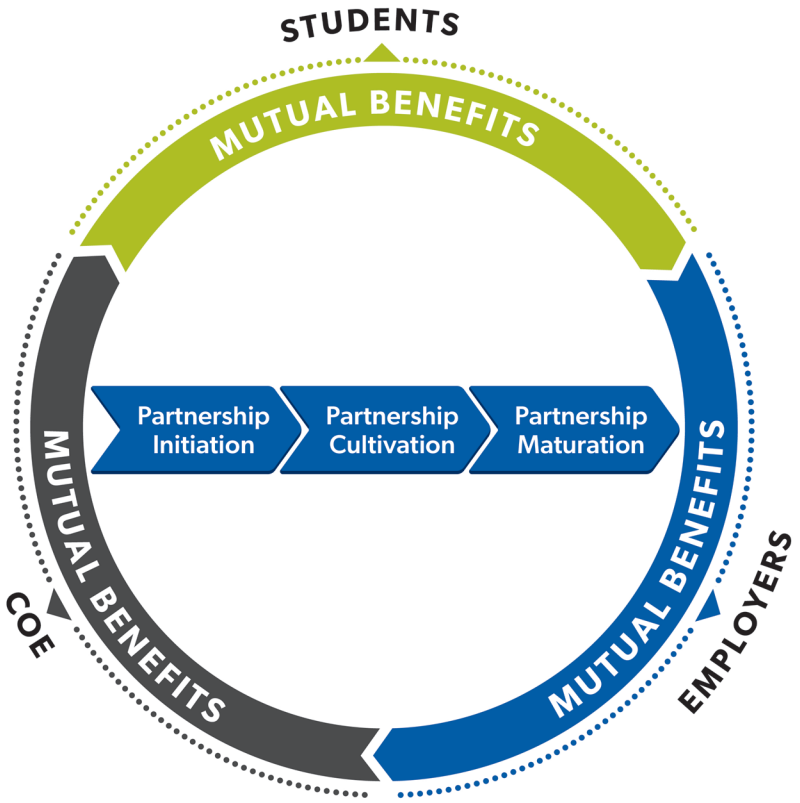
Element 2c: Regional Partnerships | COE leaders, staff, and faculty form meaningful and sustained connections with regional business-serving and workforce partners to gain actionable business intelligence on industry-wide needs and priorities, regional labor markets, available resources, and learner and worker barriers and opportunities.

Element 2d: Industry-Knowledgeable Staff & Faculty | COEs employ and develop knowledgeable and experienced staff and faculty in the COE industry of focus and facilitate ongoing professional development to support them in the creation and delivery of quality, industry-relevant programming and to share employer needs and ongoing feedback with other colleges that support programming for that industry. COEs prioritize ongoing professional development of faculty to ensure all faculty maintain current knowledge of industry developments and trends to inform quality teaching practices.

Element 2e: Mutually Beneficial Incentives | District and college leadership, faculty, staff, and industry employers commit to dedicating time, resources, and effort to pursue education and training solutions that build strong regional talent pipelines to meet the needs of both students and industry and to incentivize learners and employers to engage with the COEs.

Meaningful engagement with employers in targeted COE industries is central to ensuring relevance in programming, curricula, and WBL opportunities that lead to positive outcomes for students, COEs, and employer partners. The relationship between employers and COEs is symbiotic and must be designed for mutual benefit; that is, employers benefit from the COEs' focus on addressing industry-specific workforce needs, and COEs and individual students benefit from employers'

investment of time and willingness to share insights and feedback. Cultivating these relationships takes time and intention, but as the relationship grows and matures, the benefits grow as well.



To support this relationship, COEs must design and manage industry engagement to maximize employers' ability to provide actionable input while minimizing the burden placed upon employers to do so. Industry-based Advisory Councils will be the primary vehicles for convening industry leaders, exploring and validating labor market and skill needs, and co-designing responsive COE programming accordingly.

Process for Capturing, Analyzing, and Using LMI

The process below outlines a systematic approach for leveraging labor market information to inform decision making and enhance training value for students. In addition, the process identifies the role of the District Office and that of the individual COEs. By accessing and analyzing LMI, CCC can gain valuable insights on labor market trends, emerging industries, and skill requirements. This information will help COEs align their programs with the needs of the community.

District Role	COE Role
Identify emerging ***sectors***	Identify shifting demands ***within a sector***
Act in consultative role	Engage Advisory Council
	Align curriculum

District Responsibilities

Identify Emerging Sectors

The District Office plays an important role in analyzing and evaluating the broad labor market of Chicago to identify new and emerging industries for which CCC may need to prepare by adding new training programs, or even a new COE, to meet the forthcoming demand. At least once annually, the District should analyze comprehensive LMI to identify new opportunities and emerging industries that are not currently included in a COE. This may involve researching economic trends, engaging with local businesses, and collaborating with economic development organizations. The District should rely on verified data to identify these emerging sectors and assess their potential impact on the local workforce.

Act in a Consultative Role

The District Office should act in a consultative role for the COEs. The District should ensure that the COEs have access to LMI resources and provide expertise in interpreting and analyzing LMI data for their specific sector(s). Furthermore, they should provide information and data on workforce trends, labor market demand, and skill requirements identified through their own analysis of LMI.

COE Responsibilities

Identify Shifting Demands

Each COE must use LMI to identify changes in their own sector of focus. This may include identifying careers or programs that were once in demand but are now declining, new or emerging needs requiring new programming, or shifting skill needs in an established program area. At least once annually, COE leadership must analyze LMI and validate findings with employers to identify these areas of shifting demand and align curricula accordingly.

Engage Advisory Councils

COEs will engage their Advisory Councils to provide real-time feedback on this labor market analysis. COE leadership will share their LMI findings and discuss them with employers to obtain

feedback on the labor market trends, workforce needs, and skill gaps. Advisory Councils can provide valuable insights from the industry perspective, helping COE leadership and faculty understand the forthcoming needs of the industry.

Employer feedback is critical to vetting and fully understanding LMI. Employers provide real-world insights to help inform the COE on accuracy of the data and any missing elements. For example, LMI often can be delayed due to reporting structures, making employer feedback the quickest way to validate the accuracy of data in real time. COEs should look to ask questions to verify the following information within a structured process:

- Accuracy of job categories in demand
    - Set a standard for "high demand" within the COE industry that includes factors such as job growth rate, projected number of openings, and wages. Using these criteria, verify the high-demand jobs with the Advisory Council.
- Accurate wage ranges
    - Review wages with the Advisory Council, including all percentiles, not just median wages.
    - Ask the Advisory Council to help define accurate entry-level wages versus mid-career wages as part of the wage review.
- Skills and competencies
    - Use LMI to review specific skills needed for the position in question. Get confirmation from the Advisory Council that this information is accurate and ask participating employers to elaborate on the importance of any missing skills and competencies.
        - Employers also can provide valuable input on the use of critical tools and technologies that students will need to attain proficiency.
    - Confirm the education level required for entry with the Advisory Council (e.g., is a bachelor's degree necessary?).

Align Curricula

COEs will use LMI analysis and Advisory Council feedback to analyze current programming and curricula. Leadership should determine if new programming needs to be developed or if they need to make changes to current curricula to serve their students best and to ensure students are equipped with career-relevant relevant skills.

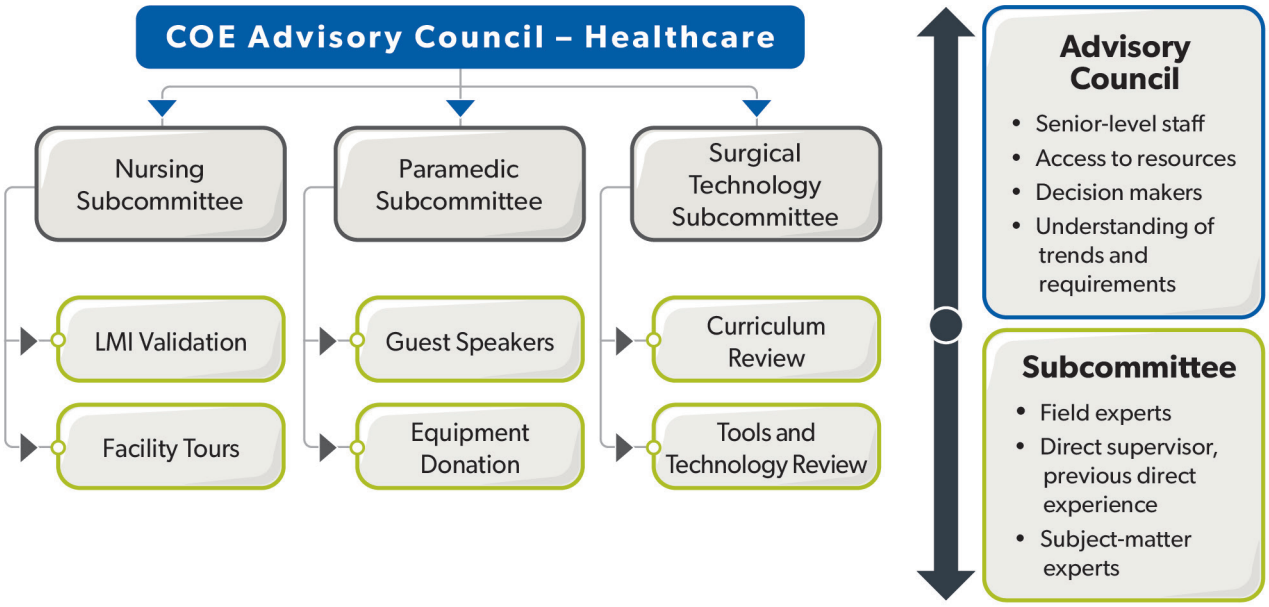
Advisory Councils

Structure

Each COE will establish a single Advisory Council to provide guidance on the full spectrum of programs across the COE, including networked programming. To further enhance its work and

collaboration, the Advisory Council may choose to establish subcommittees that focus on specific occupational clusters within the COE's industry of focus. As part of their operational framework, these subcommittees will report their activities and discussions to the Advisory Council.

For example, the Healthcare Advisory Council may choose to create subcommittees focused on nursing, paramedic, or surgical technology programming. These subcommittees must include members of the Advisory Council but also can include non-members who add expertise to the topic area. Required Advisory Council activities, such as LMI validation and curricula review, may be performed via subcommittees.



Membership

COEs must be strategic in constituting Advisory Councils; employer representatives should reflect the diversity of the industry across the region, including industry subsectors, geographic presence, business size, and business ownership by people of color and women. In addition, populating Advisory Councils with the "right" employer representatives is critical. While the specific roles may vary by industry, Council members should include employer representatives who are empowered by their organizations to influence workforce and talent development conversations and planning and to gather the appropriate input from human resources. Council members should be close to the work and their workers. They should not be C-suite-level roles but, instead, upper "middle management" who understand the day-to-day workings of their company and industry. Finally, Advisory Council members should be selected based upon their willingness to engage meaningfully and consistently; embrace their roles as advisors and ambassadors; connect COEs to existing sector-strategy work happening in the community; and champion the COEs within their networks, from industry/employer perspectives and on behalf of colleges and their students.

Membership Minimum Standards

Each Advisory Council should consist of at least five members representing the specific industry each program serves within the local community. Membership should include the COE Dean and may include full-time faculty connected to COE programming. However, CCC faculty and staff membership combined should not exceed the number of industry representatives. Membership should reflect an appropriate representation of gender and racial and ethnic minorities.

Member Appointment

While the COE Dean is responsible for Advisory Council recruitment, Advisory Council members must be approved and appointed by the College President.

Membership Terms and Conditions

Members shall serve 3-year terms and be eligible for reappointment. Each year of service will begin with the first day of each fall semester. Membership vacancies will be filled for the time remaining in the term involved.

Co-Chairs

The COE Dean will co-chair the Advisory Council with a representative from business or industry, elected by Council members. This industry Co-Chair should be able to conduct meetings in an organized and productive manner.

Member Engagement

Council members should seek ways to actively contribute to, and use their expertise in support of, CCC programming. Members who fail to attend two or more consecutive Advisory Council meetings may be removed from membership by the President.

Meeting Frequency

Industry Advisory Councils must be empowered and encouraged to engage in real ways with COE staff and faculty around their workforce needs and challenges, shape COEs' priorities and strategies, and provide input on current and potential programming. Establishment and convening of Advisory Councils must be meaningful and intentional rather than a "check the box" exercise to meet federal funding requirements. Therefore, Council meetings should happen frequently enough to enable employer representatives' input on COEs' plans and activities as they evolve, in as close to real time as possible.

Advisory Councils must meet twice yearly at a minimum; in some cases, quarterly convening may be more effective.

Advisory Council Responsibilities

At a minimum, Advisory Councils must:

- Review/Validate LMI findings at least once annually.
- Review curricula at least once annually and when new curricula are added or substantive changes are being made to curricula, per Illinois Community College Board requirements.
- Evaluate existing equipment, facilities, and resources and recommend improvements.
- Examine data and outcomes relating to quality and quantity of graduates and job placement, including COE KPIs.

Meeting Agendas and Minutes

Each meeting will have a prepared agenda and will cover, at a minimum, the following topics:

- Welcome and introductions, taking time to review the purpose of the Advisory Council
- Report from COE leadership, including updates on initiatives, programs, challenges, and successes (not more than 10% of meeting time)
- Review of and discussion about relevant LMI findings (at least once per year)
- Curriculum updates
- Updates from industry representatives, giving opportunity to share insights, feedback, or additional needs
- Review of student success and outcomes

Each meeting should be followed up with meeting minutes, identifying members in attendance and summarizing topics discussed, as well as reminders of any follow-up actions required.

For additional information and best practices on Advisory Councils, see the Illinois Community College Board's and the Illinois State Board of Education's Advisory Committee Guidebook.

Industry and Employer Communications and Engagement Practices

In complex workforce development ecosystems like those in Chicago, it's common for multiple workforce and education partners to call upon a single employer to serve in both advisory and other roles (WBL provider, job placement, donor, etc.). This practice can cause fatigue, disengagement, and frustration for employers; it also perpetuates disconnects and limits information sharing among different units within colleges and among community partners serving the same industry. COEs must structure industry and employer outreach, engagement, and Advisory Council involvement to be as coordinated, manageable, and non-burdensome for employer representatives as possible. COEs must establish practices for communicating with employers in their target industries—both Advisory Council members and others—that are consistent and easy to understand and that provide value to employers. Employer outreach and communications should seek not just to make "asks" of employers; rather, they should, for example, share progress on COEs' commitments to industry and employer partners and labor market and other intelligence that is useful in employers' own talent development efforts.

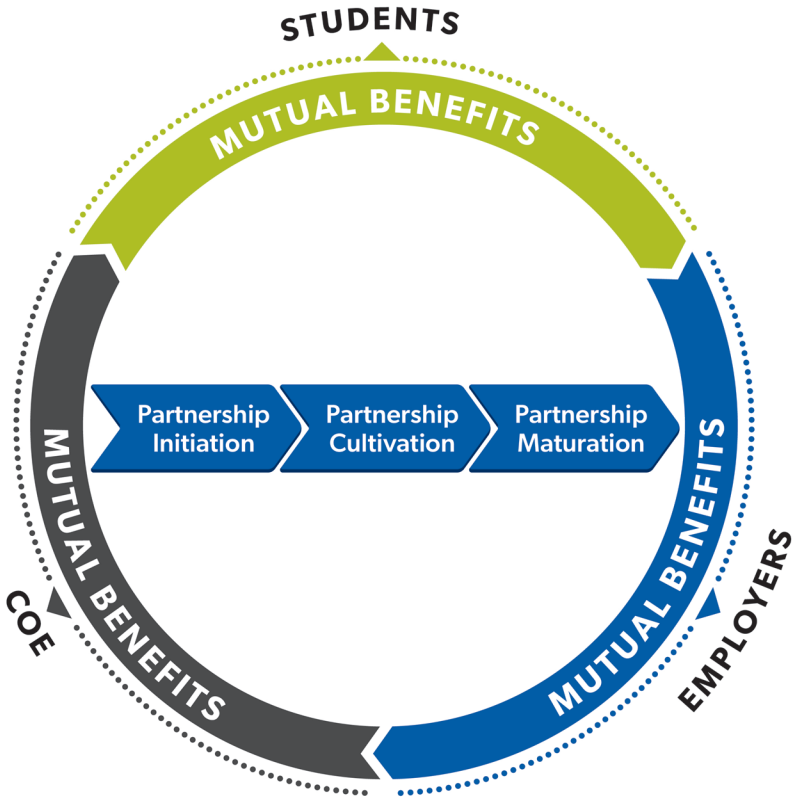
Ideally, COEs should establish industry-knowledgeable single points of contact (SPOCs) wherever possible for employers in their target industries. These SPOCs should be employers' trusted first contacts for workforce needs and issues and should be well networked with other COE, college, and community partner staff to connect employers to resources and supports outside of COEs' direct areas of focus. Industry SPOCs themselves are not expected to be the "solvers" of all employer challenges; rather, with appropriate structures and supports in place, they can serve in brokering roles, connecting employer partners to the information and resources they need from other parts of the COE or college or from the community.

Because COEs will have many different types of relationships with employers, it may be necessary to clarify who is responsible for each type of relationship. For example, the SPOC may be responsible for all Advisory Council and employer event conversations, while someone else may be responsible for a relationship with the employer key contact for WBL opportunities. Whether it is possible always to rely on a SPOC or whether it is necessary to divide these responsibilities, they must be clearly understood and documented for each COE. Additionally, these employer engagements must be tracked as required in ***Pillar 4: Measurement, Assessment, & Continuous Improvement***.

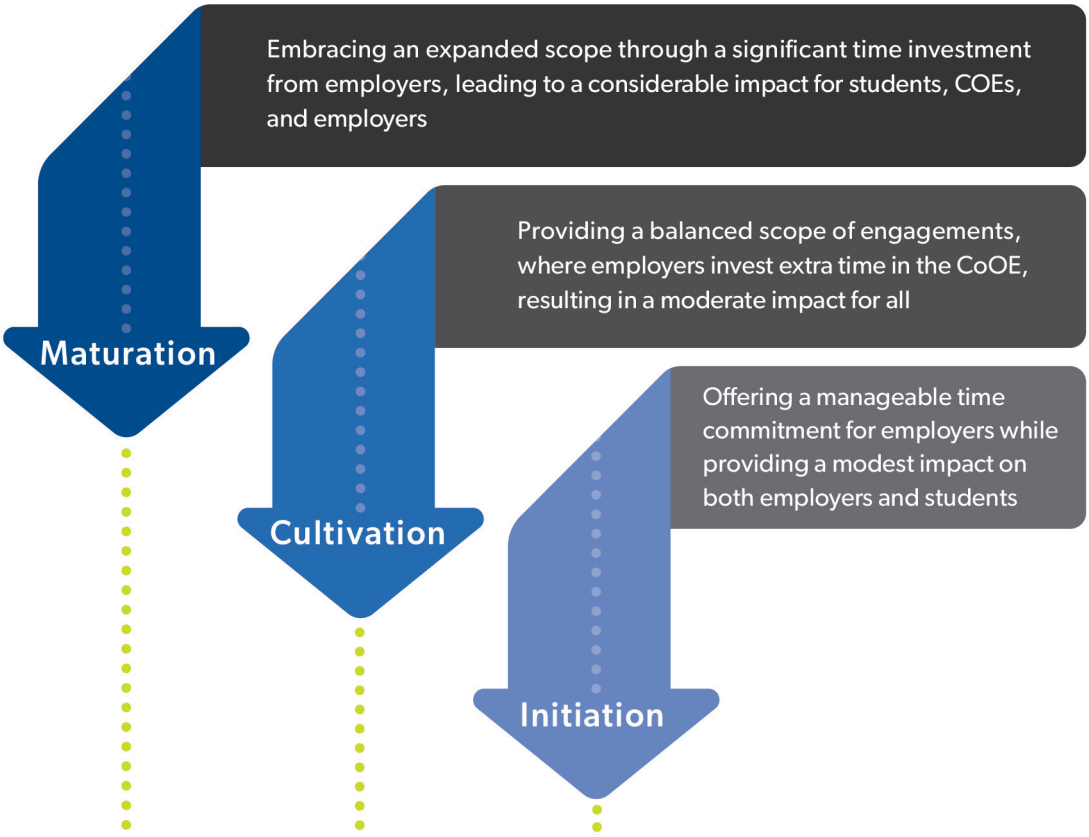
Designing Meaningful Industry and Employer Conversations

In Advisory Council meetings and in any other interactions with industry employers, it is important to focus conversations in topical areas that are of greatest relevance to employers and that can offer the most useful feedback to COEs to inform their direction and work. Agendas and discussions must be designed with these dual purposes in mind. Critical topics for regular conversation include:

- Check-ins with industry and employer representatives to understand evolving economic dynamics, industry trends and issues, workforce gaps and needs, and desired workforce education and training solutions.
- Presentation of synthesized and analyzed LMI for validation and refinement based on employers' day-to-day practical experience.
- More detailed analyses of talent demand and talent supply, i.e., comparisons of quantified and employer-validated occupational projections in relation to program completion and credential attainment in employers' occupational priority areas to identify areas in which COEs and colleges might be under- or overdeveloping talent in relation to demand.
- Opportunities for employers to give feedback on the quality and results of current COE programming, with a focus on which programs and activities are successfully meeting their needs and why, as well as which programs and activities aren't effectively meeting their needs and why, and what changes should be made.
- Opportunities for employers to provide input on their needs and expectations related to critical occupations, competencies, and credentials, in relation to existing and future programming, for design of programs, curricula, and WBL experiences.
- Discussions with employers that focus on students, both WBL participants and graduates/hires, to better understand student and worker barriers and ongoing skill development and to support needs and design solutions collaboratively.
- Discussions with employers that focus on what success looks like from their perspectives and how they measure that success. For example, while colleges and COEs may focus on performance around enrollment, program retention, and completion rates, employers may be more interested in evaluating the connection between credential attainment and demonstration of skills proficiency, job retention/turnover reductions, and on-the-job performance.



While employer relationships need to start at a place that is manageable for the employer and although their investment of time and resources may be low, as employer relationships deepen, the mutual benefits will grow.



Milestones of a maturing employer partnership will be marked by the following:

PARTNERSHIP INITIATION	PARTNERSHIP CULTIVATION	PARTNERSHIP MATURATION
• Cultivation of rapport • Facilitation of open communication • Initiation of limited project engagement • Connection often made through a warm handoff from a partner	• Expanded communication channels • Strengthened bonds via joint planning, involving additional stakeholders • Gradual broadening of project scope	• Robust and trusted partnership • Dynamic, needs-based relationship • Deepened partnership initiatives • Championing of initiatives to other employers and partners
CORRESPONDING ACTIVITIES		
• Job/career fairs • Guest speakers • Fact-finding meetings	• Work-based learning experiences • Advisory Council subcommittee participation • Facility tours	• Apprenticeships • Advisory Council participation • Financial and in-kind support (e.g., equipment and supply donations) • Customized training

Partner Engagement

COE training programs are an essential piece of a community-wide workforce development system that involves multiple stakeholders, policies, organizations, and other institutions. To maximize their impact on individual students, both CCC and individual COEs need to engage actively with the wider Chicagoland workforce development system, which includes partners like the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership and its individual American Job Centers (AJCs); economic development partners, like World Business Chicago; business-serving associations; and a host of community-based organizations (CBOs) that offer necessary support services to CCC students and career seekers.

District Relationships

Ideally, District Office staff are responsible for cultivating broad relationships with organizations that encompass all sectors. These include organizations like the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership and World Business Chicago. It is essential, however, that the District Office staff involved in these partnerships share pertinent information with COE leadership and make important connections between relevant COE leadership and any sector-specific work being done by these key organizations.

COE Relationships

COE leaders have the responsibility of forming and maintaining partnerships with sector-specific organizations, such as business-serving organizations and associations. This may include attending meetings, serving on committees, and seeking involvement on Advisory Councils. Information obtained from these interactions should be shared with all COE staff, relevant faculty, and all networked colleges across the COE.

Additionally, COEs should intentionally forge relationships with nearby AJCs and CBOs to coordinate efforts for a seamless service delivery system. These partnerships should build AJC and CBO staff understanding of COE programming, employer relationships, and CCC enrollment and financial processes. Likewise, COE staff should work to understand how AJC and CBO programs can support CCC students with financial supports for training and other wraparound services. COE staff should look for ways to increase coordination with AJCs and CBOs to provide a "no wrong door" approach for students who may qualify for services.

Partnership Tracking

Overlapping relationships across different COEs are expected. Given this reality, it is important that COEs track partner activity and relationships using Salesforce. To the extent possible, these partnerships should be coordinated internally to provide the best customer service to CCC students and to partner customers.

Work-Based Learning

Work-based learning experiences are crucial to the success of students involved in COE programming, and they benefit the COE and its employer partners. Beyond the benefits of WBL opportunities for students outlined in ***Pillar 3: Equitable Student Access, Recruitment, & Outcomes***, WBL fosters strong ties between educational institutions and employers. These partnerships can lead to ongoing collaboration, ensuring that training programs remain aligned with industry needs.

COEs must ensure they are intentionally engaging employers in WBL opportunities and are following the established CCC guidance for providing and tracking these opportunities.

COE Sector Meetings

The COEs will organize internal CCC Sector Meetings every 6 months to facilitate communication and coordination among networked colleges and the District Office team regarding challenges, goals, strategies, and best practices. These meetings will serve as a platform for COE staff to share pertinent LMI, insights gathered from Advisory Councils, and progress on KPIs. Additionally,

networked colleges can share updates on their employer engagement initiatives and discuss any sector-specific challenges they are experiencing. The primary aim of these meetings is to foster collaboration and coordination across all networked colleges within the relevant COE sector.

A sample COE Sector Meeting agenda may include:

1. **Sector Update and Trends**
    a. Presentation on the current state of the COE sector, including LMI, enrollment trends, and regulatory changes
    b. Discussion of emerging challenges and opportunities within the sector
    c. Discussion of challenges that colleges (COE and networked) are facing with regard to program delivery and student outcomes
2. **KPI Progress Update**
    a. Presentation on current KPIs
    b. Prioritization and selection of the most critical areas for focus
3. **Strategy Formulation**
    a. Discussion to develop strategies for addressing the identified priority areas
    b. Consideration of factors such as student access and success, curriculum enhancement, and employer engagement
4. **Partner Engagement**
    a. Update on current partner engagement, including industry organizations, AJCs, and CBOs
    b. Consideration of potential collaborations or partnerships to leverage resources
5. **Collaboration and Networking Opportunities**
    a. Sharing of best practices, success stories, and innovative initiatives across the COE networked colleges
    b. Identification of opportunities for collaboration and knowledge sharing

Professional Development

For the vitality and success of the COE and the students it serves, ongoing professional development is essential for all COE-related staff and faculty for several reasons:

Maintaining Industry Relevance	Enhancing Teaching Strategies	Mastering New Technologies	Meeting Diverse Student Needs
To provide students with the most up-to-date and practical knowledge, faculty and staff need to maintain strong connections with the industry. Professional development opportunities enable them to network, attend industry events, and engage in collaborative projects, thus ensuring that their teaching is grounded in real-world industry practices.	Continuous professional development equips faculty with a diverse range of teaching strategies and assessment methods. This enables them to engage students effectively, address diverse learning styles, and create dynamic learning experiences that enhance skills acquisition. This may be particularly important for faculty who have spent time in the industry but have little teaching experience.	Technological advancements play a pivotal role in a variety of sectors. Faculty need to be well versed in the latest tools and technologies relevant to their field to ensure students are acquiring relevant skills.	Effective professional development empowers faculty to employ inclusive teaching practices, accommodate diverse learners, and create a supportive and equitable learning environment to meet the diverse abilities and needs of COE students.

To fulfill this objective, COEs must make relevant professional development opportunities available to all COE-related faculty and staff, extending this access to COE-networked faculty at other CCC colleges. While the COE is responsible for curating opportunities, the home college of the faculty will provide the budget for professional development.

These opportunities should include:

- *Industry-specific training*, such as workshops or conferences.
- *Pedagogical training*, which is especially beneficial for faculty members with industry experience but limited teaching background. This type of training may include workshops or courses on innovative teaching methods, assessment techniques, and classroom management.
- *Technology integration*, equipping faculty to incorporate industry-specific technology into their courses.

Design and facilitation of professional development opportunities may be informed by labor market analysis and input from employers; COEs also may take advantage of industry-specific conferences or workshops offered by local trade and professional organizations. COE leadership must ensure faculty and staff awareness of and access to professional development opportunities, and may require that faculty and staff complete professional development activities.

Implementation Evidence

- Advisory Council membership roster, meeting schedule, and meeting notes
- COE Sector Meeting schedules, agendas, and minutes
- Assessment of partnerships, including breadth (number) and depth (quality of relationships)
- Professional development opportunities made available to faculty and staff
- Faculty participation in professional development, separated by general teaching and learning opportunities and industry-specific professional development
- Robust Salesforce tracking, demonstrating outreach and relationships with employers

PILLAR 3

Equitable Student Access, Recruitment, & Outcomes

COEs conduct intentional recruitment and onboarding and provide ongoing support to ensure equitable and informed access to high-quality, industry-focused programming that leads to successful completion, credential attainment, and employment outcomes for a diverse audience of learners.

Element 3a: Equity-Driven Access | District and college leadership and staff are intentional in their efforts to include all potential student populations in their outreach, creating a culture of inclusion that engages students who are underrepresented in the current COE industry pipelines. Colleges collaborate to make COE programming geographically accessible to the greatest number of students across the city through high-quality networked programming.

Element 3b: Career-Focused Program Exploration | COEs supply resources and staff support for students to explore in-demand careers and their associated education, training, credentials, and employability skills requirements, including assessments, access to LMI, career pathway maps, job-shadowing opportunities, access to employers, and various other methods.

Element 3c: Career Seeking, Transition, & Follow-Up Support | COEs offer students career readiness courses and/or experiences focused on direct employment transition upon graduation/program completion, including employability skills training, last-mile or bridge programming, and career preparation and search assistance.

Element 3d: Data-Driven Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access (DEIA) Strategies | District leadership leverages data systems and dashboards that increase college/COE access to disaggregated demographic data, facilitates evaluation of current program diversity related to in-demand occupations, and compares program diversity data with student success metrics to inform DEIA strategies.

In a community college system in which 75% of students are Black or Latinx, diversity is one of City Colleges' greatest strengths; however, CCC continues to see gaps in student outcomes by race. The COEs play a pivotal role in ensuring that all students—and potential students—have access to quality education that leads to careers that offer living wages. For this reason, equitable student access, supports, and outcomes are inextricably tied to the success of each COE. Equitable student access and success are essential to Chicago for several reasons:

- **Economic mobility.** Ensuring equitable access enables individuals from diverse backgrounds to gain the skills needed for living-wage jobs. This in turn promotes economic mobility and reduces income inequality.

- **Meeting regional needs.** When student access is equitable, the workforce becomes more diverse and inclusive, contributing to a more skilled and adaptable labor force and ensuring that industries can tap into a broader talent pool.
- **Addressing systemic disparities.** Education can play a key role in addressing systemic disparities in society. By prioritizing equitable access and success, COEs can contribute to the breakdown of barriers and creation of a fairer, more inclusive community.
- **Equitable retention and completion.** Equitable access also must be accompanied by equitable outcomes, ensuring that students from all backgrounds have the support and resources they need to complete their training successfully. This in turn leads to higher program completion rates and better employment prospects.

COEs do not necessarily need to create new solutions, programming, or initiatives to provide student access and supports; rather, they should prioritize alignment and collaboration with the ongoing equity efforts across CCC. As of October 2023, these efforts include their work with Achieving the Dream, the Student Success Framework, and the Equity Partners Impact Community and their work with Aspen Community College Excellence.

Access

Given the unique challenges associated with the size and geography of Chicago and the complex nature of the CCC system, finding ways to assist prospective students in accessing in-demand training is crucial to achieving equitable outcomes for all students.

Access to Information

District Responsibility

In alignment with Strategic Objective 1.2 of CCC's 2021–2025 Strategic Framework, CCC will make COE training programs, career pathway exploration, and connection to relevant training programs readily available to prospective students to assist them in finding the program and training that align with their skills, interests, and employment desires. These opportunities may take the form of online career interest and skills assessments that engage students and provide them with relevant information or guided exploration activities to help them understand the in-demand offerings of the COEs, including projected labor market growth, accurate wage estimates, and the types of positions available in the area.

The District also is responsible for ensuring that a clear process is in place for connecting a student to the correct COE once they have selected an area to pursue.

COE Responsibility

COEs should make relevant pathway data available to prospective students, as well as clear information on training programs and the types of careers that these programs may lead to. This

information may be available through the college website or through in-person events. Pathway data may include career pathway maps and information on wages, training requirements, skill requirements, and employer partners who hire for those careers.

COEs should use multiple avenues and partnerships to expose as many prospective students as possible to the in-demand training programs offered through the COE. These avenues may include dual-enrollment programs with high schools, integrated education and training (IET) programs with Adult Education, participation in career fairs and other events intended to expose young people and adults to in-demand occupations, and more. COEs should partner with industry organizations and other community-based partners to maximize their reach.

Access to Advising

As outlined in Pillar 1, COEs must provide industry-knowledgeable advising. Advisors with industry-related knowledge can play a pivotal role in ensuring that students receive high-quality education and guidance tailored to their chosen career pathway. Advisors who are knowledgeable in the industry provide:

- **Relevance.** Industry-knowledgeable advisors can provide guidance that is directly applicable to the COE-specific industry. This ensures that students receive advice and insights that are up to date and relevant to their career path.
- **Real-world insights.** Advisors with industry knowledge can offer real-world insights on the challenges, trends, and opportunities within the specific sector. This can help students make informed decisions about their education and career plans.
- **Career path guidance.** Industry-knowledgeable advisors can help students map their career paths and set realistic goals. They can provide guidance on employment opportunities in the future.
- **Problem solving.** Advisors who understand the specific sector can assist students in overcoming challenges and hurdles related to their program of interest. They can provide advice on how to navigate industry-specific issues and make informed decisions.

In addition to the mandatory advising being implemented across all colleges, when possible, colleges should assign COE-specific advisors. When it is not possible to assign COE-specific advisors, colleges must, at a minimum, have specialized advisors who stay up to date on industry requirements, program requirements, and career pathways. COE-specific and specialized advisors must attend the COE Sector Meetings (see ***Pillar 1: Leadership & Vision***).

Academic advisors must also be knowledgeable about programming across COEs, enabling them to direct students to the appropriate college if their career interests cannot be served at a particular college. Academic advisors must have a clear understanding of which courses a student can take at any college versus courses that are available only through the COE.

COEs will be responsible for providing relevant professional development and materials to advisors to assist them in this responsibility. COEs will provide "two-pagers" for each of their programs, outlining the available career pathways and training requirements and opportunities.

Additionally, COEs will be responsible for providing professional development to their COE-specific advisors, as well as annual professional development to all advisors at districtwide "professional development days."

Access to Programming

Recognizing that geographic access is directly related to equity, and considering the unique geographic challenges associated with implementing COEs in a city as expansive as Chicago, it is imperative that COEs identify and implement strategies for ensuring that in-demand programs are accessible to all individuals where they live and work, providing equitable access to employment and career advancement opportunities. Students across Chicago—regardless of location, socioeconomic status, or other factors—should have access to in-demand programming that aligns with their career interests and skills. Accessibility may come through in-person and virtual avenues.

- **In-person access.** COEs should work with other colleges to "network" their in-demand programming so that these programs can be offered in person at strategic locations across the city. This may be initiated by a college whose leadership desires to offer a program that falls within the purview of another COE, or that is offered by the COE itself, in an effort to increase the industry reach of their COE. This determination may include a ZIP code analysis of the COE students' residences. If, for example, COE students are clustered around the COE college, and there is not a greater reach across the city, a COE may consider physically expanding their reach by networking their COE programming with other colleges. Colleges should follow the process laid out in ***Pillar 1: Leadership & Vision*** to network COE programming.

- **Multiple modalities.** COEs can make a variety of in-demand training programs available virtually, enabling the COEs to continue to offer the in-demand programs to students across the city. In addition to geographic access, virtual programming may provide flexibility for students to access in-demand programming around other life commitments, like family and work. On the other hand, many students want in-person classes, so programs should be offered in person as well.

- **Strategic scheduling.** COEs should survey students and review course fill rates to identify whether the schedule is meeting students' needs. COEs can implement innovative scheduling options, such as weekend courses or third-shift cohorts. In addition to meeting student needs, this may increase capacity to grow programs in COEs that are limited by space or equipment access. Once a scheduling option has been implemented to meet student need, COEs must ensure that students are able to complete their entire program within that schedule model. For example, if most courses in a program are offered on weekends, but one course is offered only on weekdays, then students may not be able to finish the program.

The result of expanding COE programs is that students from across the city gain access to in-demand training opportunities that lead to high-growth careers, increased wages, and career pathways for their future.

Work-Based Learning

Work-based learning experiences are crucial to the success of students involved in COE programming. WBL experiences provide the following benefits:

- **Real-world application:** WBL gives students the opportunity to apply in a real-world context the knowledge and skills they've acquired. This practical experience is invaluable in bridging the gap between theory and practice.
- **Skill development:** These experiences enable students to develop industry-specific skills, gaining hands-on experience in the tasks and responsibilities they will encounter in their future careers.
- **Industry relevance:** WBL ensures that students are exposed to the latest industry practices, trends, and technologies. This exposure is vital for students' career readiness upon completion of their training.
- **Networking opportunities:** Students participating in WBL have the chance to build valuable professional networks. These connections can lead to job opportunities, mentorship, and a deeper understanding of the industry landscape.
- **Career exploration:** WBL lets students explore different roles within an industry. This exposure helps them make informed decisions about their career paths, potentially leading to roles that are more fulfilling and for which they are well suited.
- **Employability skills development:** In addition to technical skills, WBL helps students develop employability skills that are essential for their future careers.

COEs must ensure they are intentionally engaging students in WBL opportunities and are following the established CCC guidance for providing and tracking these opportunities.

Student Support

COEs should prioritize student support and success, benefiting both students and program sustainability. Adequate support structures significantly enhance learning outcomes and retention rates. To avoid redundant efforts within COEs, it is important to establish a strong connection with the college's Student Success Framework. This connection may involve appointing COE staff to attend meetings or to liaise with the college's designated point of contact, ensuring that the COE comprehensively understands the available student support resources and how those resources can actively contribute to successful implementation of the framework.

Furthermore, COEs should determine how the four pillars that comprise the Student Success Framework are incorporated into COE programming. The four pillars are:

1. Student Engagement
2. Academic Performance Monitoring
3. Technology and Systems
4. Holistic Hospitality

Implementation Evidence

- COE advising staff who are knowledgeable about the industry
- Evidence of career pathway information provided to prospective and current students
- Professional development offered to COE advisors and District advisors on pathways and opportunities in the sector
- Evidence of dual-enrollment programs, IET programs
- Student Success Framework data

PILLAR 4:

Measurement, Assessment, & Continuous Improvement

CCC establishes clear goals, accountability measures, and KPIs for COEs to monitor and assess progress in implementing the COE's mission, vision, values, and framework. A culture of regular assessment and continuous improvement is established and supported to respond to changing student and industry needs.

Element 4a: Data Tracking Systems & Processes | CCC outlines expectations for accessing student and employer data, tracking performance measures, and data-informed program development and continuous improvement. CCC creates a dashboard for tracking individual COE and systemwide COE implementation measures and monitoring progress toward goals. CCC reviews dashboard data annually to assess progress.

Element 4b: Regular Customer Feedback Mechanisms | CCC uses regular feedback mechanisms to collect input from students, employers, faculty, and staff about COE programs, processes, goals, initiatives, outcomes, etc. This feedback is used for continuous improvement.

Element 4c: Measured Success & Accountability | CCC sets high-level, systemwide COE success measures to monitor COE performance; ensure quality; and provide transparency about expectations, accountability, and status for each key metric. CCC establishes incentives and corrective plans related to COE performance.

Measurement, assessment, and continuous improvement are critical components for ensuring that COE programming meets the needs of students and employers. Understanding what data to track, how to analyze those data, and what levers to pull to improve outcomes will maximize the impact that each COE can have on individual students and their sectors of focus.

Tracking Employer Engagement, Outreach, and Communications

Given the complexity of CCC and the city it serves, tracking communication and outreach across all COEs and colleges is essential to inform COE strategic outreach and planning as well as day-to-day functions. COEs will use Salesforce to track all employer engagement activities.

All COE staff and related faculty who interact with employers will track that interaction in Salesforce by following CCC's Salesforce guidelines. These guidelines include the components outlined below.

- **License assignment**
  - "Relationship owners" who have direct contact with employers on a regular basis have a Salesforce license and input their own data.
  - Each COE will identify a data-entry point person (or multiple people) and a process to input data for those who have occasional or ad hoc communications.
- **Consistent practices for entry and training**
  - Users will adhere to the CCC Salesforce manual that includes information about account creation, service entry, call logs, and data entry expectations, such as employer contact information, common services and activities, and timelines.
- **Accountability practices**
  - Each COE will assign staff to run monthly reports/dashboards in Salesforce. This tracking will be used as part of the Annual Progress Review and KPI accountability process.

Feedback Mechanisms

Creating a culture of continuous improvement should be rooted in a deep understanding of the needs and experiences of the individuals the COE serves and its stakeholders. Regular feedback loops are essential for developing this understanding.

Employers

COEs will use the standard CCC employer survey to gather feedback from employers after each specific event, including:

- Hiring events
- Advisory Council convenings
- Information sessions

COEs will need to develop a process for regularly administering surveys and for storing and analyzing the collected data to be used for continuous improvement processes and as part of the Annual Progress Review evaluation.

Before the Annual Progress Review, using the standard CCC annual employer feedback survey, COEs will distribute the survey to all employers who engaged with the COE over the last year, including through Advisory Councils, hiring events, and WBL. Broad in nature, this annual survey will gather information about employers' perceptions of the COE, the COE's level of success in talent pipeline development, student job candidate quality and success, and ways in which the employer is willing to be involved with the COE in the future. The data from the annual feedback survey will be used as part of the Annual Progress Review evaluation.

Students

Feedback from students is equally essential to understanding the effectiveness of the COE and students' experience while exploring and engaging in high-demand training opportunities. Using the standard CCC survey, COEs will gather feedback from students annually about their progress and success and will collect feedback from specific events, including WBL experiences, hiring events, and career placement assistance, as well as what students would like to see added, incorporated, or improved. COE staff will need to develop a process for collecting, storing, and analyzing these data, which will be included in the Annual Progress Review evaluation.

CCC Partners

Once annually, the District Office will conduct a partnership survey to gather feedback and insights from various stakeholders, including CBOs, workforce development partners, economic development partners, and others to understand the needs and expectations of community partners, as well as partners' perceptions of and experiences with CCC.

The District will need to work collaboratively with COEs to gather the list of partners and contacts who should receive the survey. Topics covered in the survey will include overall satisfaction with COE programming, perceived strengths and weaknesses of CCC's partnership, CCC's relevance to those whom the partner serves, and potential collaboration opportunities.

COE Staff and Related Faculty

Surveys of COE staff and related faculty play a crucial role in creating a culture of continuous feedback by providing essential insights on programming and COE implementation. District staff will conduct an annual survey to collect feedback from COE staff and related faculty to solicit feedback relevant to COE implementation, including COE leadership, professional development opportunities, and resource prioritization.

The District will collect this information and then share individual COE results with each College President. The information will be used for continuous improvement as well as for discussion at the Annual Progress Review evaluation, though it will not be included in COE KPIs.

Accountability and Continuous Improvement

Using the established COE KPIs (see the table below titled "Center of Excellence Key Performing Indicators"), CCC will identify baseline measures for each COE. Using a "green light, yellow light, red light" system of KPI measurement provides a simple visual method to assess the COE's performance levels.

1. **"Green light"** (90% or more of target) indicates the COE is performing at the desired level for that specific KPI. When a KPI is in the green light zone, it signifies the process or work associated with the KPI is operating successfully.

2. **"Yellow light"** (70% to 89% of target) represents a KPI at risk. Yellow indicates that performance is approaching a critical threshold or falling slightly below the expected level. A yellow light serves as an early indicator that improvements may need to be made to process or other operations. The COE should analyze this specific area to understand the underlying causes and take appropriate action.

3. **"Red light"** (69% or below of target) indicates that the COE's performance is below the acceptable level for a KPI. When a KPI enters the red zone, it signifies a critical issue or significant deviation from the plan or target. Immediate action should be taken to address the problem and move performance back on track.

Annual Progress Review

The Chancellor and COE leadership will comprehensively evaluate the COE's KPI progress and overall impact annually. In preparation for this meeting, COE leadership will compile KPI-related information into a scorecard, which will be provided to the Chancellor in advance for review. The COE leadership also will complete and submit their COE Annual Plan, a comprehensive COE plan that outlines their strategies for the forthcoming year. The strategies will address the need for improvement in any area in which the KPIs have fallen short of their targets.

The meeting will focus primarily on an in-depth examination of COE KPIs, encompassing an analysis of COE successes and challenges. Furthermore, the meeting will give COE leadership and the Chancellor an opportunity to engage in discussions regarding the COE's strategic improvement plan for the following year. After this meeting, the Chancellor either will approve the COE Annual Plan or will recommend improvements.

Underperforming COEs

COEs that fall in the yellow or the red zone, or a combination of both, for 40% or more of their KPIs will be deemed "underperforming" and subject to increased review. This designation triggers a set of requirements aimed at rectifying the shortcomings and driving the COEs toward improved performance.

To ensure accountability and transparency, these underperforming COEs will be required to provide quarterly progress updates addressing areas in which they failed to meet KPIs and to provide supporting documentation. These accountability requirements encourage COEs to engage in continuous self-assessment and improvement with the goal of enhancing their performance and impact.

Recognizing the key role that college leadership plays in driving the success of COEs, the expectation is that COEs will prioritize and actively support efforts to improve their performance. These efforts may include restructuring processes, revising strategies, or enhancing resource allocation to bolster areas of weakness.

While a COE remains in the underperforming category, no special initiatives, capital investments, or new programming unrelated to the COE will be approved by the District. This measure prioritizes efficient allocation of resources and direct focus on areas that require immediate attention.

The aim of this framework is not punitive; rather, it seeks to support COEs in overcoming challenges and enhancing their contributions to the organization's overarching goals. By offering a clear path to improvement, CCC hopes to foster a culture of accountability and continuous progress.

Center of Excellence Key Performing Indicators

Centers of Excellence (COEs) key performing indicators (KPIs) consist of the following measures:

Leading Measures	Data Source	Related Pillar(s)
1. COE program enrollment	Dashboard	• Leadership & Vision • Equitable Student Access, Recruitment, & Outcomes
2. Student representation of special population groups in COE programming	Dashboard	• Leadership & Vision • Equitable Student Access, Recruitment, & Outcomes
3. COE stackable certificate continuation	Dashboard	• Equitable Student Access, Recruitment, & Outcomes
4. Student retention (fall-to-spring and fall-to-fall)	Dashboard	• Equitable Student Access, Recruitment, & Outcomes
5. Number of COE industry-relevant employer partners providing WBL or postgraduate job opportunities	Dashboard	• Industry Engagement & Curriculum Alignment
6. Number of students in industry-relevant WBL opportunities	Dashboard	• Industry Engagement & Curriculum Alignment • Student Access & Success
7. Number of professional development offerings for COE staff and related faculty	College reports	• Student Access & Success
8. Partnership quantity and quality: a. Number of partner engagements (quantity) b. Number of partners with next steps (quality) c. Number of partners engaged in more than one way (depth)	Salesforce reports	• Industry Engagement & Curriculum Alignment

Leading Measures	Data Source	Related Pillar(s)
1. COE program completion	Dashboard	• Equitable Student Access, Recruitment, & Outcomes
2. Student outcomes, disaggregated by special population groups (could use Career and Technical Education definition of special population groups) a. Employment in related field b. Annual wages	TBD	• Equitable Student Access, Recruitment, & Outcomes
	TBD	• Industry Engagement & Curriculum Alignment • Student Access & Success
	TBD	• Industry Engagement & Curriculum Alignment • Equitable Student Access, Recruitment, & Outcomes
3. Increase in number of partnerships and sustained partnerships	Salesforce reports	• Leadership & Vision • Industry Engagement & Curriculum Alignment • Student Access & Success
4. Feedback data provided by employers (number completing)	Employer survey	• Industry Engagement & Curriculum Alignment
5. Employer satisfaction score	Employer survey	• Industry Engagement & Curriculum Alignment
6. Feedback provided by students (number completing)	Student survey	• Equitable Student Access, Recruitment, & Outcomes
7. Student satisfaction score	Student survey	• Equitable Student Access, Recruitment, & Outcomes

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