Call for Applications

Join the Value Data Collaborative

The Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP) and the Coleridge Initiative, with support from Westat, seek proposals to connect and use postsecondary and workforce data to understand and improve the delivery of postsecondary value to all students. Proposals are encouraged from teams consisting of representatives of state higher education agencies, workforce agencies, higher education institutions, systems of institutions or other interested parties,

Participants in the Value Data Collaborative will conduct original research that evaluates student outcomes through the lens of postsecondary value, build technical expertise and capacity in analytics and data infrastructure, learn alongside peers in other states and institutions, and engage in Community of Practice events to make meaning of their research and use their findings to inform changes in policy and practice.

Specifically, the Value Data Collaborative seeks to achieve the following:

- Build practice- and policy-relevant evidence through customized research on postsecondary value, tailored to each participant's focus areas, goals, and strategic plans.
- Inform state, system, and institutional policy change by improving understanding of their own students' outcomes.
- Promote transparency and collective knowledge of postsecondary value outcomes by supporting participants to externally publish findings, reports and other aggregate data related to postsecondary value.
- Foster peer relationships with experts across agencies and sectors within states, as well as across states and institutions, to strengthen their capacity to sustain related work in the future.

All participants will receive analytic support and technical assistance from IHEP, the Coleridge Initiative, and Westat. In addition, the Coleridge Initiative will provide participants with a secure cloud-based platform and other data infrastructure needed to securely conduct data analysis

using student-level data. Examples of previous research projects leveraging this secure infrastructure can be found [here](#).

Value Data Collaborative participants will use this platform to provide secure access to deidentified data on postsecondary enrollment, financial aid, degree completion and workforce outcomes, to a limited number of core project staff. This data will be used to conduct original research, and to support a customized [Applied Data Analytics](#) training.

To be eligible for participation and funding, applicants must demonstrate the ability to achieve the following during the project period:

- Submit deidentified student-level data on postsecondary educational experiences and workforce outcomes to Coleridge Initiative's secure computational research platform, the [Administrative Data Research Facility](#) (ADRF).

- Allow secure access to these deidentified data for a limited number of core project staff at the Coleridge Initiative, Westat, IHEP, and to approved training participants that complete relevant non-disclosure agreement(s). This access will be necessary to fulfill the expectations that follow and will be used only for the purposes described here. Participants will provide final approval of all data summaries exported from the ADRF.

- Complete all required legal agreements, including a data-sharing agreement (DSA) with the Coleridge Initiative, necessary for the requirements described in this Call for Applications.

- Use their data in an Applied Data Analytics class, to complete an original research project that explores postsecondary value and aligns with their policy goals and authorize access to that data to other participating teams within the secure environment.

- Participate in Community of Practice events, leveraging data analyses to inform strategic decision-making and inform policy and practice change.

Participants will receive the following benefits:

- An honorarium of $10,000 per team, to support staff capacity and engagement.

- Analytic support and technical assistance from IHEP, the Coleridge Initiative, and Westat to support original research and build analytic capacity among team members.

- Access to the ADRF's secure cloud-based platform and other data infrastructure needed to securely conduct data analysis using student-level data, during the Applied Data Analytics training, and for six months after.

- Invitations to virtual and in-person community of practice events, and travel support to selected attendees, as well as access to all community of practice resources and products.

- Access to exploratory data dashboards that can be used with approved stakeholders after the training.

This Call for Applications includes:

1. Background & Project Objectives
2. Value Data Collaborative Partners
3. Participation Details
4. Application Requirements
5. Budget
6. Timeline

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1.   Background & Project Objectives

In 2021, the Postsecondary Value Commission released the [Postsecondary Value Framework](#), which outlines the clear value-add that postsecondary education can provide to students and society, in both economic and non-economic terms. Core to the framework is a set of economic value thresholds that measure earnings and wealth outcomes over time, using a series of benchmarks (see Table 1 below for the value thresholds focused on earnings).

Assessing institutional, system, or state performance on those thresholds can uncover strong points and areas for improvement in access, attainment, and post-college outcomes. The framework incorporates measures of student investment in their education, adjusts for state-specific variation in wages, and explicitly centers access for diverse student populations *and* supporting those students through graduation and beyond. The Postsecondary Value Framework provides a robust assessment of value in postsecondary education.

Table 1: Value Threshold Definitions[1]

Threshold	Definition
T0 "Minimum Economic Return"	A student meets this threshold if they earn at least as much as a high school graduate plus enough to recoup their total net price within ten years.
T1 "Earnings Premium"	A student meets this threshold if they reach at least the median earnings in their field of study, which accounts for expected variations in pay across fields.
T2 "Earnings Parity"	This threshold measures whether students of color, students from low-income backgrounds, and women meet the median earnings of their more advantaged peers (White students, high-income students, or men).

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[1] The Postsecondary Value Framework's economic value thresholds also includes two Thresholds measuring wealth outcomes of former students, but these thresholds cannot be measured at the institution level with [currently available data sources](#).

T3 "Earnings Mobility"	This threshold measures whether students earn enough to enter the fourth (upper middle) income quintile regardless of field of study.

The Value Data Collaborative seeks to expand the reach and impact of these economic value metrics by partnering with states, higher education institutions, and systems to evaluate student outcomes through the lens of postsecondary value and continuous improvement.

2. Value Data Collaborative Partners

The Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP)

IHEP drives systemic change in higher education to advance equitable outcomes and generational impact for communities historically marginalized on the basis of race, ethnicity, or income. IHEP achieves this change through research, advocacy, policy development, and field engagement. IHEP serves as the project lead for the Value Data Collaborative, including coordination with all participants and other Value Data Collaborative partners, providing expertise on the Postsecondary Value Framework's economic value metrics and support on research projects, and hosting Community of Practice events.

The Coleridge Initiative

The Coleridge Initiative is a nonprofit organization working with governments to ensure that data are more effectively used for public decision-making. Coleridge does this both by providing a platform to securely link confidential data within and across states and agencies, and by providing data literacy training to agency staff. Their platform is the Administrative Data Research Facility (ADRF) which is a secure, FedRAMP-authorized, cloud-based environment that enables government agencies to link confidential administrative data across agencies and states. The Coleridge Initiative serves as the data infrastructure partner, including providing technological infrastructure for participants to share and link data across agencies (e.g., workforce records and postsecondary enrollment and completion data). Coleridge also leads and coordinates Applied Data Analytics trainings for state agencies and institutional staff to learn and apply modern data analysis methods to answer real-world questions related to postsecondary value and develop open-source tools that can be used after training ends to improve decision making.

Westat

Westat seeks improvement in the lives of historically underserved and economically disadvantaged populations through research. Its design and implementation of user-friendly research and evaluation tools for learning, improvement, and planning support a broad range of policies, programs, and services that benefit these populations. Westat serves as the analytic lead for the Value Data Collaborative. Westat staff provide content, research design, and coding expertise to assist states' implementation of the Postsecondary Value Framework's economic value metrics.

3. Value Data Collaborative Participation Requirements

Submit deidentified student-level data on postsecondary enrollment, financial aid, completions, and workforce outcomes to the Coleridge Initiative's Administrative Data Research Facility (ADRF).

The ADRF is a secure FEDRAMP moderate cloud-based computational research environment that promotes access to and analytic insights based on confidential microdata. Selected applicants will submit deidentified student-level data on postsecondary educational experiences and workforce outcomes to the ADRF and allow access to these data to a limited number of core project staff at the Coleridge Initiative, Westat, IHEP, and approved training participants that complete relevant non-disclosure agreement(s). This access will be necessary to fulfill the expectations that follow and will be used only for the purposes described here. Participants will provide final approval of all data summaries exported from the ADRF.

Exhibit A includes an ideal list of data elements. Application materials should include a description of which elements are available, from which sources, and whether the applicant is committed to securing a data sharing agreement that includes all necessary parties to share those elements within the ADRF.

Participate in a customized [Applied Data Analytics](#) training focused on postsecondary value and drawing on the data described above, and conduct original research on participant priorities related to postsecondary value.

Using the data submitted to the ADRF, participants will commit teams to engage in a Coleridge-led Applied Data Analytics training focused on postsecondary value. Applicants are strongly encouraged to collaborate across agencies or departments by including representatives from state postsecondary agencies, state workforce/employment agencies, higher education systems or institutions, or other key stakeholders. Each participating team member should be prepared to commit their time and expertise to complete all [Applied Data Analytics class requirements](#), including completing a collaborative and policy-oriented original research project. Each team must include at least one member comfortable working with data and coding in either R or SQL, one member with close knowledge of state policy and/or institutional practices, and one member who is well-versed in data availability, definitions, and governance.

This training will develop participants' project scoping, coding and analytic skills and provide hands-on opportunities to use data to answer research questions about postsecondary value. Participants will produce and present a final presentation and report on the findings of their research. Data providers must agree to share deidentified student-level data within the ADRF

for the Applied Data Analytics training and to provide access to that data to a limited number of Coleridge, IHEP, and Westat staff, as well as to authorized users from other participating teams conducting similar research projects.

Proposals should include a description of the applicant's specific interest in postsecondary value and how participating in this class could advance their organizational mission and strategic goals. Data providers will be supported to use their own research findings from the Applied Data Analytics class to support externally facing publications, and to work with other participating teams to share findings from research conducted by others.

Engage in Community of Practice events to connect research findings with policy and practice solutions.

Participants will attend in-person and online meetings with national leaders and Value Data Collaborative peers to support meaning making, strategy development, and action planning based on data analysis and research. The Community of Practice is designed to create a network of value-focused state, system, and institutional leaders, and will be a space to uplift and support best practices, ongoing work, and research in the equitable value movement. The format, timing, length, content, and emphasis will be determined based on the needs of participants.

4.   Application Requirements

Applications should address each of the following requirements and should not exceed five (5) single-spaced pages. Supplemental materials, such as the table in Exhibit A, available data documentation, sample data-sharing agreements, or prior research and analysis, may be included as an appendix and do not count towards this five-page limit.

Data Availability

Proposals should clearly describe which data elements are available, from what sources, and whether that data can be shared within the ADRF, including completing the table in Exhibit A. Available data dictionaries or other documentation may be included as an appendix in the application. Proposals should also make note of any potential barriers to providing access to data to authorized users for the purposes of the Applied Data Analytics training.

At a minimum, applicants should ensure data related to postsecondary enrollment, degree completion, and workforce outcomes are available and can be shared within the ADRF. A full list of required and preferred data elements is included in Exhibit A. For data elements owned or governed by another agency or entity, such as wage records, we strongly encourage data providers to include a statement of support from that agency or submit a joint application with other data providing entities.

Previous Data-Sharing Experience

Applications should include a description of the following:

- The status of any existing or prospective data-sharing agreements (DSAs) with the Coleridge Initiative, including a description of what data is currently or will be available through the ADRF as part of those agreements.

- Any other previous experience navigating cross-agency data sharing agreements or memorandums of understanding (MOUs), particularly any previous experience with data sharing across postsecondary and workforce systems, including the status of any cross-agency data sharing agreements necessary to conduct analysis that combines postsecondary and workforce data. Example agreements may be included as an appendix.

- An overview of existing privacy and security requirements related to data access for external researchers, and any processes or previous experience providing external researchers access to the data. Sample non-disclosure agreements or other relevant documents may be included as an appendix.

- A description of applicable standards for aggregate data review, publication and privacy suppression, as well as any examples of previous publications that include aggregate administrative data. Documentation of data export rules for aggregate data output may be included as an appendix.

- Data-sharing and access procedures relevant to personally identifiable information and hashing procedures,[2] and any other relevant experience with complex administrative records. Data security policies and requirements, data destruction policies, or other formal documents may be included as an appendix.

Commitment to Measuring Value to Drive Action

Proposals should include a clear statement of and evidence for the entity's demonstrated commitment to postsecondary value principles, and to data-driven approaches to investigating and improving postsecondary value.

This section should include the specific research questions(s), or topic(s) related to postsecondary value that data providers will prioritize as part of this project and how these questions or topics will advance the organization's strategic priorities and goals. Previously published research and analysis as well as any examples of previous policy or practice change intended to improve postsecondary value and/or aligned with Value Data Collaborative goals should be described here.

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[2] Hashing refers to the process of replacing Personally identifiable information (PII) with a unique but secure combination of characters and numbers of a fixed length called a "hash" using a mathematical function.

In addition, this section should include a clear description of existing strategic priorities and plans with an emphasis on their alignment with Value Data Collaborative principles and ways in which Value Data Collaborative participation can help advance these goals. This includes a description of any strategic plans or priorities that focus on outcomes and support for specific student populations.

Project Team

The application should include a description of the proposed project team, including any state higher education or workforce agencies, higher education institutions, or other partners who will provide data access and/or contribute staff time for this work. Data providers are strongly encouraged to collaborate across agencies or departments. For example, the strongest proposals will include representatives from postsecondary and/or education agencies, state workforce agencies, and other relevant agencies. ***Each team must include at least one member comfortable working with data and coding in either R or SQL, one member with close knowledge of state policy and/or institutional practices, and one member who is well-versed in data availability, definitions, and governance.***

A letter of support or direct participation from all data-sharing partners is strongly encouraged. Applications should include information about the key team members(s) who will be working on this project, including brief bio(s) that highlight their relevant expertise and a description of each team member's anticipated role.

Organizational Mission, Values, and Commitments

Value Data Collaborative partners are committed to working with entities who have a demonstrated track record of advancing postsecondary access and success for all individuals, regardless of background or circumstance. In addition, we prioritize partnerships with organizations committed to cultivating internal work environments that reflect their mission and values. Please describe your organization's mission, values, and commitments; identify specific strategies to advance student access, success, and post-college economic outcomes, including any strategic priority populations supported by your work; and describe how your workplace culture reflects your organizational mission.

5. Budget

IHEP will provide financial support to selected participants in the form of an honorarium to enhance staff capacity to engage in each of the requirements described above. Honoraria of $10,000 per team will be provided to support capacity required for legal and technical requirements related to data-sharing. In addition, participation in the Applied Data Analytics class will be covered at no cost to participants.

6.   Proposal Process and Timeline

Call for Applications opens	March 26, 2025
Prospective applicants submit any clarifying questions about the Call for Applications	April 18, 2025
Applications due	June 20, 2025
Selected applicants notified	July, 2025

Once selected applicants have been notified, project teams will work with IHEP and the other Value Data Collaborative partners to execute project contracts, including determining detailed project milestones and timelines.

Proposals are due to IHEP by 5:00 pm PT on June 20, 2025. Please reach out with questions by April 18, 2025 and submit proposals by June 20, 2025. Proposals and questions should be directed to Daniella Paradise (dparadise@ihep.org) on or before the relevant deadline.

Exhibit A: Ideal List of Available Data

As part of your application to participate in the Value Data Collaborative, please complete the following table, making note of which data elements are available, from which entities, and whether that data is authorized to be shared through the ADRF. Applicants who have similar data elements or who can derive these elements from other available data should make note of those details in their submission.

Table Name	Key Fields Desired	Source (e.g. "Department of Employment Security"; please list "N/A" if data element is not available)	Authorized to share within ADRF (Please indicate if a DSA is needed and the status of any necessary agreements.)
Unemployment Insurance Wage Record Data	**Hashed SSN or other unique identifier***		
	Hashed first & last name*		
	Address, city, and/or state*		
	UI Account number		
	Employer Identification Number		
	Year and Quarter*		
	Date or year of birth		
	Wages*		
	Hours worked		
	Weeks worked		
	NAICS code		
Education Data	**Hashed SSN or other unique identifier***		
	Name		

	Date or year of birth		
	Gender*		
	Address, city, and/or state		
	Race/ethnicity*		
	Year*		
	Degree level (Bachelor's, Associates, etc.)*		
	Campus ID		
	Residency status		
	CIP code*		
	Degree conferred date, term or year*		
	Program start date, term or year*		
	IPEDS identifier (UNITID) of institution*		
	Student ID		
	Program name		
	Previous degree		
	Date prior degree awarded		
Financial Aid Data	Student ID		
	Academic year		
	Attendance intensity		
	Expected family		

	contribution		
	Grants		
	Federal Pell grants		
	Loans		
	Residency status		
	Student gross income		
	Family annual income		
	Tuition and housing costs		

*Indicates data elements that must be available in some form for participation in the Value Data Collaborative