REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)

MISSISSIPPI INTEGRATED BASIC EDUCATION AND SKILLS TRAINING (MI-BEST)

APPLICATION DEADLINE: December 4, 2015 by 5:00 pm CST

Completed applications are accepted on a rolling basis until the deadline.

Submit completed applications to: Kenneth Wheatley @ kwheatley@mccb.edu and Nikitna Barnes @ nbarnes@mccb.edu

INQUIRIES:

Please send all inquiries in writing to: Kenneth Wheatley @ kwheatley@mccb.edu.

Responses will be made in the MI-BEST Application FAQ, which will be posted here: http://www.mccb.edu/ResDev/RdDefault.aspx.

Please check this document frequently for important information related to application development.

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I. MI-BEST PROGRAM OVERVIEW

A. Purpose

If America is to regain its economic footing and compete on the global economic stage, then it is imperative that it significantly increase the rate of postsecondary education and credential attainment among a vast segment of the population that is undereducated and untrained for 21st Century jobs. This challenge is even more pronounced in Mississippi (MS), where a significant number of residents lack a high school credential or the skills necessary for family-supporting careers.

The **Mississippi Community College Board (MCCB),** in collaboration with the state's 15 community and junior colleges, seeks to address this challenge by scaling statewide an integrated career pathway initiative. Entitled the **Mississippi Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (MI-BEST),** this initiative targets primarily high school dropouts, low-income persons, and other non-traditional students and accelerates their transition from basic skills education to postsecondary programs of study. MI-BEST is premised on the highly successful, evidence-based **Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST)** model, launched in Washington (WA) state, that incorporates contextualized learning by concurrently delivering Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Career and Technical Education (CTE) classes using a team-teaching approach. The model holds promise for its effectiveness in increasing the rate of Adult Basic Education students entering into and succeeding in postsecondary education programs that ultimately lead to self-sufficient family wages. Through MI-BEST, Mississippi joins a growing number of states implementing best practices designed to recover and accelerate postsecondary credential attainment among high school dropouts and other nontraditional students.[1]

MI-BEST is premised on two simple goals:

> ***1. Increase family-sustaining wages among high school dropouts and non-traditional students in Mississippi by improving educational outcomes and career-focused skills.***
>
> ***2: Scale the integrated career pathways approach statewide among Mississippi Community and Junior Colleges.***

With funding from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF), MCCB and the fifteen partner colleges have engaged in a planning process yielding a framework for the establishment of integrated career pathways through the MI-BEST (See Program Requirements Section). This framework provides an evidenced-based approach to addressing the state's skilled workforce gap by engaging a large segment of working-

[1] The Mississippi Community College Board would like to express its appreciation for the agencies (and initiatives) whose work we consulted or adapted in the development of this application: Arkansas Association of Two Year Colleges (Accelerating Opportunity Arkansas); Jobs for the Future (Accelerating Opportunity); Kansas Board of Regents (Accelerating Opportunity Kansas); Kentucky Community and Technical College System (Accelerating Opportunity Kentucky); Technical College System of Georgia (Accelerating Opportunity Georgia); Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (Accelerate Texas); and WA State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (I-BEST).

age Mississippians without a high school diploma or its equivalency, the large number of high school graduates that lack basic literacy and math skills, and those unskilled or under-skilled adults, and Mississippians who are non-native English language learners. Because a significant focus of the initiative is on high school drop-outs, colleges must fully admit students without a high school credential into credit and non-credit programs of study in order to access MI-BEST funds.

B. Outcome Goals

Colleges will design and implement programs and re-align or develop policies that enable each MI-BEST student to achieve the following **baseline outcomes** within a two-year period.

All students will achieve:

- High School Equivalency (HSE) Diploma; **AND**
- Career Readiness Certificate (CRC) (Silver level recommended); **AND**
- Completion of a minimum 20 contact hours of employability/life skills training; **AND**
- Completion of work-based learning opportunities (in chosen pathway or a related field); **AND**

For CTE programs:	**For Workforce programs:**
➢ At least 15 college level, career pathway credits **AND**; ➢ Pertinent, national industry-based credential or other MCCB approved credential for CTE pathway;	➢ Pertinent, national industry-based credential or other MCCB approved credential for Workforce pathway **AND**; ➢ **ALL AVAILABLE** college level, career pathway credits for industry-based credential through a PLA process;

Resulting in:

- Employment (in chosen pathway or a related field); **AND/OR**
- Continued postsecondary enrollment towards higher level credential attainment (Certificate or Associates Degree); **OR**
- Enrollment in the U.S. military

Each college must enroll and complete no less than 25 students per year for a minimum of 75 MI-BEST students during the three-year project period.

Students are expected to achieve these baseline outcomes within a two-year time frame. Students that "stop-out" for one semester can return to the program, with the 2-year completion window starting with the semester of original enrollment. Students who are not enrolled in pathway classes and/or work-based learning for two consecutive semesters are considered "drop-outs" and should be removed from MI-BEST rosters.

C. MCCB Support for MI-BEST Initiative

MCCB must approve all integrated career pathways programs submitted by colleges to be eligible for MI-BEST funding. Review of proposed MI-BEST programs for approval will be provided through this application process.

In addition, MCCB will assist community colleges implementing MI-BEST programs through ongoing technical assistance and support, including:

- ***Statewide Implementation Team meetings.*** MCCB will convene college leaders and practitioners in statewide implementation team meetings to discuss the progress and challenges of MI-BEST implementation at their own colleges, and obtain college input on the implementation of the larger initiative. When possible, MCCB will leverage existing statewide meetings to reduce the travel burden on colleges.
- ***Virtual and in-person workshops.*** As needed, MCCB will organize and host webinars or smaller face-to-face workshops with designated college staff on high-interest topics related to successful program implementation.
- ***Technical Assistance Site Visits.*** MCCB will conduct site visits with colleges during the three-year project period to support program implementation, identify collective barriers, and document program and student success.
- ***Tools and Resources.*** MCCB will identify and disseminate tools that can help colleges effectively implement their MI-BEST programs.
- ***Strategic Communications.*** MCCB will disseminate information about MI-BEST at the state level to key agencies, political officials, employers, and other stakeholders to strengthen buy-in, and share the progress and success of the initiative.
- ***Policy Support.*** MCCB will work with each college to help identify policy issues or barriers that need to be addressed or clarified at the state level.
- ***Braided Funding.*** MCCB will continue its efforts to engage foundations, other state agencies, the state legislature, and other funders in supporting MI-BEST programs.

II. MI-BEST PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

A. Target Population

The MI-BEST target population includes persons who have low skills as defined by their lack of high school credential attainment and/or academic skill levels. MI-BEST target students may also be persons who are low-income, unemployed, non-traditional students, English Language Learners (ELL), eligible for TANF/public assistance, and veterans.

All MI-BEST students must be current residents of Mississippi.

Colleges are strongly encouraged to recruit and enroll female and male students in non-traditional career pathway programs.

MI-BEST students:

- Must not have a high school diploma/equivalency credential at the time of admission. At least 80% of students must fit these criteria.
    - Recognizing that many students that have a high school credential still have significant academic skill deficiencies, MI-BEST allows for a small percentage of these students to be included in the program. No more than 20% of recruited MI-BEST students may possess a high school diploma/equivalency credential at the time of admission, and they must meet the skill-level requirements noted below.
- Must have low academic skill levels at the time of admission.
    - Students **WITHOUT** a high school credential must test at Education Function Level (EFL) or National Reporting System (NRS) Levels 4-6 (or 6th-11.9 grade level equivalency) as indicated by the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) in one, two, or all three academic skill areas (reading, writing, mathematics). Students must be at least 6th grade level in all subjects/academic skill areas.
    - Students **WITH** a high school credential (no more than 20% of target students) must test at EFL or NRS Level 4 (or 6-8.9 grade level equivalency) as indicated by the TABE test in one or more academic skill areas. Students must be at least 6th grade level in all subjects/academic skill areas.
    - English Language Learners (ELL) scoring at NRS Level 5 and above (High Intermediate EFL)*.

NRS Educational Functioning Levels	Grade Equivalent Range	ABE EFL Descriptor	TABE 9/10 Scale Score Ranges		
			Reading	Total Math	Language
EFL 4	6.0-8.9	Intermediate High	518-566	506-565	524-559
EFL 5*	9.0-10.9	ASE Low	567-595	566-594	560-585
EFL 6	11.0+	ASE High	596+	595+	586+
Colleges must TABE test (pre-test & post-test) all MI-BEST students in accordance to ABE state guidelines for TABE Pre/Post testing.					

- Must not be enrolled in a secondary school or postsecondary school;
- Must not be compulsory school age. (The student must be at least seventeen (17) years on or before September 1 of the calendar year.)
- Must not be eligible for HSE testing exceptions per ABE program requirements (if students are compulsory school age and are at least 16 years of age).

B. Required Program Elements

1. Policy Change. Colleges must revise policies and financing strategies to remove barriers to student progress and improve credential attainment and jobs for underprepared adult learners. These changes can also help to sustain and expand MI-BEST programs to benefit many more adult learners seeking postsecondary credentials.

- As an initial step in this work, colleges must describe what, if any, institutional policy changes are necessary to admit students without a high school diploma or equivalency credential into credit-bearing CTE or Workforce programs. Colleges must describe how they will make these changes within the first 60-90 days of program launch.
- Colleges may also identify policies at the state level that need to be changed or clarified to enhance program success.

2. College Implementation Team (CIT). Colleges must establish a cross-organization team encompassing internal and external stakeholders to implement their MI-BEST program.

- Participants should include the MI-BEST Project Coordinator, Student Navigator, Vice President for Academic Affairs, director of Adult Education/Basic Skills, dean and/or directors of selected CTE/Workforce programs to be included in MI-BEST, relevant staff from the Offices of Admissions, Registrar, Financial Aid, Developmental Education, Testing/Assessment Center, Learning Assistance Center, Student Support Services, the Director of Institutional Research and other relevant offices/organizations that can support student success. The team should also include external partners such as representatives from the Workforce Investment Board, local and regional employer partners, and community-based organizations.
- The College Implementation Team will assist with program implementation — including addressing any challenges/issues that may arise or any institutional policy or practice barriers that hinder student progress. The College Implementation Team will also help to promote college culture change to support full integration of MI-BEST students into the college, and will work to ensure program sustainability beyond the MI-BEST grant.
- Colleges will determine how frequently the College Implementation Team will meet, though monthly meetings are expected in the first several months to ensure successful launch of the implementation phase and corrective actions as needed to achieve the program goals.

3. At Least Two (2) High-Demand Integrated Career Pathway Programs. **Colleges must develop at least two (2) integrated career pathways under MI-BEST and at least one (1) must be a college level, credit-bearing CTE program.** MCCB will approve up to six (6) integrated career pathways under MI-BEST. Integrated career pathways are expected to lead to high-wage, high-skill occupations in high demand.

a) To select the appropriate occupational programs in which to develop integrated career pathways:

- For each proposed occupation, colleges must provide evidence of **strong local and regional labor market demand** in the industry through a variety of sources. *(See **Appendix 1** for a list of resources available to help you verify this information.)*
    - Colleges must select programs with strong current and future labor market demand to ensure stable program offerings that support achievement of initiative goals during the project period. However, given the dynamic labor market, colleges can change or add pathways at the beginning of a new semester with prior MCCB approval and evidence of strong demand and student interest.
- Colleges must also provide **wage data** on the selected programs which indicate that the programs have the potential for paying a family-sustaining wage. *(See **Appendix 2** for resources to assist with identifying living wages for particular geographic areas and/or for particular occupations. Resources noted in **Appendix 1** may also be applicable here.)*
- Colleges must implement integrated career pathways that are **connected to MCCB-approved programs of study**. *(See **Appendix 3** for more information on connecting your integrated career pathways to programs of study.)*
    - ***Workforce programs must demonstrate how the national industry-based credentials they provide can connect students to a credit-bearing CTE pathway at their college or another Mississippi community or junior college.***
- Colleges should select occupational pathways with **strong student interest** and that appeal to males and females.
    - **Colleges are strongly encouraged to recruit and enroll female and male students in non-traditional career pathway programs**.
- Colleges must describe the CTE/Workforce program capacity and **determine how many MI-BEST students can be enrolled in each pathway program per year.**
    - The 25 MI-BEST students per year can be split at the college's discretion. (The requirement is not 25 students per pathway but 25 program completers across selected pathways, which will require that greater than 25 students be recruited and enrolled).
    - **Note:** Colleges are free to complete more than 25 students per year; however, no additional funding will be provided for enrolling and completing more than 25 MI-BEST students per year. Colleges must braid/leverage funding from multiple sources to support MI-BEST students and expand the program to other eligible students who can benefit from the integrated pathway approach.

b) To design and implement proposed integrated career pathways, colleges must:

Recruit and concurrently enroll students in connected adult education and eligible postsecondary programs leading to a HSE and at least one MCCB-approved certificate/credential and beyond;

  - Colleges must admit students without a high school diploma/equivalency credential and allow them to begin to complete CTE or Workforce courses before their HSE credential is attained.
  - Colleges must be prepared to begin their MI-BEST programs and classes no later than January 2016.
  - College intake processes must include strategies such as interviews, career counseling, Programs of Study, etc., to help minimize student stop-outs/drop-outs.
  - Colleges are encouraged to recruit women and men into non-traditional career pathway programs.
  - Once enrolled, colleges are encouraged to incorporate MI-BEST students into classes with non-MI-BEST students. Colleges should plan for the most cost effective means when determining class/course scheduling options.
- Include at **least a 25% instructional overlap (team teaching)** in ABE and CTE or Workforce courses:
  - Team teaching is strongly recommended for all core classes of the CTE or Workforce pathway(s).
  - For students without a high school credential, High School Equivalency (HSE) preparation resulting in high levels of HSE attainment is required to support employment outcomes and preparation for the next steps in the career pathway. Colleges can utilize a number of strategies to increase passage of the HSE exam along with attainment of the relevant CTE or Workforce credential. **Potential strategies might include: 1)** starting contextualized HSE preparation before the CTE or Workforce classes to allow students to pass a couple of HSE sections before starting their career-focused classes. However, colleges must not misconstrue this guidance and return to the traditional linear approach to HSE and CTE/Workforce postsecondary education and training; and **2)** engaging employers to help communicate the importance of the HSE to the long-term success of the workers they hire. **Note:** See **HSE Completion Incentive** requirement in the budget section.
- Provide **structured course sequences** that are articulated and contextualized to allow students to advance to higher levels of education and employment;
  - For CTE programs, these career pathways must adhere to MCCB-approved programs of study (15/30/45/60). *(**See** http://www.mccb.edu/OCI/currdownload.aspx to review approved curricula for occupational programs.)*
  - **Workforce programs must connect to the CTE programs of study through national, industry-based credentials that can "stack" into higher certificates or degrees within CTE programs**.
  - For each pathway (whether CTE or workforce), colleges must prepare **a career pathways infographic** which outlines the multiple entry and exit points, including specific credentials/degree, jobs that can be obtained at exit, and wages/salaries at each level. *(See template for this infographic in **Appendix 4**.)*
  - Colleges must utilize the Infographic in recruitment and intake processes and in ongoing career counseling about next steps once an initial integrated career pathway credential is attained.

- Provide **acceleration strategies** for students to reduce time to completion in attainment of recognized postsecondary credentials/degrees/industry-relevant certifications with labor market value.
    - This might include technology-based academic skills-building programs, hybrid (combined online and classroom-based) courses, credit for prior learning through challenge exams, tutoring, or other strategies.
- Provide students with **intrusive counseling and supportive services** to attain academic and career goals. **Support services** include, but are not limited to, academic and career counseling, tutoring, child care, housing, transportation, access to entitled public benefits, subsidized jobs, financial advising, retention counseling or life-challenge support services (through partnering with social service agencies) and other wrap-around services that will increase the likelihood of student persistence and success.
    - Career counseling should help students to explore the occupational pathways and select one that best fits their aptitudes and interests to minimize changing pathways and maximize potential for students to achieve the baseline outcome goals within two years.
    - Ongoing case management for enrolled students should be provided to help students complete their programs and obtain other baseline outline requirements within a 2-year window. **Only MI-BEST students may receive direct support services provided by the Student Navigator**.
    - MI-BEST students must receive the same privileges as regularly admitted students. For example, MI-BEST students must be granted student IDs and permission to utilize college services such as computer labs, library use, etc.
    - Student Navigators must develop a **"resources toolkit"** within the first six months of program launch to help identify and connect students to internal and external resources that can support their persistence and retention. The resource toolkit must be updated each semester, as needed, to capture additional resources.
- Provide **work-based learning opportunities** to increase application of knowledge gained and potential for employment. This might include internships, apprenticeships, or other strategies in which students apply their technical training in partnership with an employer organization. *(See **Appendix 5** for resources on work-based learning.)*
- Provide each MI-BEST student **a minimum 20 contact hours of employability/life skills training**, such as written and oral communications, professionalism, critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork, collaboration, customer service, time management, financial planning, resuming writing, interviewing skills, dressing for success, etc.
- Provide **at least 15 college level, career pathway credit hours for CTE programs or ALL AVAILABLE college level, career pathway credits for Workforce programs with immediate transcription of credits in the semester or quarter in which they are earned**;
    - All CTE credits must be transcripted at the time of successful completion of each course, with actual GPA credit awarded the semester it is earned. AUDIT credit and CR credit are not acceptable forms of credit.

- When appropriate, colleges must use **Prior Learning Assessments (PLA)** to facilitate CTE credits to be earned by students.
- Colleges must use Prior Learning Assessments (PLA) such as challenge exams to help Workforce students earn CTE credit hours for their national, industry-based credentials **before exiting** the Workforce program. *(See **Appendix 6** for more information about the use of Prior Learning Assessments. See **Appendix 7** for flowchart template on the Student PLA Request Process.)*

- Provide "**next step" support to students** after attainment of initial integrated career pathway credential, including employment placement assistance or referrals to this support offered by partner organizations, as well as advising and assistance in continuing their higher education.
- Organize the program in a **flexible manner** to meet the needs of nontraditional students/adult learners, including evening or weekend classes/service delivery, block scheduling and other strategies.
- Develop and implement the program in **collaboration with local/regional business and industry partners**, including public (nonprofit) and private sector entities and workforce partners.

4. Strategic Communications and Dissemination. Colleges must develop strategies to inform internal and external stakeholders about the progress and success of the MI-BEST program and its students.

- Colleges can utilize existing communications mechanisms to share positive results, as well as develop new communications strategies.
- Colleges must also participate, as needed, in statewide dissemination events organized by MCCB.
- Colleges may use their MI-BEST grant to support strategic communications and dissemination activities; however, out-of-state travel (e.g. for presentation at national conferences) requires written approval from MCCB.
- College must utilize the MI-BEST logo and note that MCCB, with support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the Workforce Enhancement Training Fund (WET), is a partial funder of the program in all communications and dissemination activities about the program.
- Colleges must use the Kellogg Foundation's full name "W.K. Kellogg Foundation" for all first references in communications or publications. The second reference may be cited as "WKKF." Colleges may not use the WKKF logo without written permission from the WKKF Communications Department at communications@wkkf.org. College must also notify MCCB of such requests prior to publication.
- Should colleges wish to cite standard information about WKKF, then the following boilerplate information must be used in the communication/publication:
- **About the W.K. Kellogg Foundation- "***The W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF), founded in 1930 as an independent, private foundation by breakfast cereal pioneer, Will Keith Kellogg, is among the largest philanthropic foundations in the United States. Guided by the belief that all children should have an equal opportunity to thrive, WKKF works with communities to*

create conditions for vulnerable children so they can realize their full potential in school, work, and life."

5. Capacity-Building and Professional Development. Colleges must participate in MCCB-sponsored meetings, conferences, workshops, webinars, and other technical assistance activities related to the MI-BEST initiative.

- Some of these activities will be organized to address the needs of particular partners (e.g. faculty, Student Navigators, etc.).
- Colleges may include funding to support travel related to these activities in their MI-BEST program budgets.

6. Sustainability Planning. As the MI-BEST programs are established and show success, colleges must build capacity to sustain these innovations over time, including strategies to embed them into the college's ongoing operations, expand to other CTE or Workforce programs, and finance these efforts. *(See **Appendix 8** for sustainability planning resources.)*

- During the 3-year implementation period, colleges must build momentum towards scale and sustainability of integrated career pathway programs and expanding the postsecondary success of underprepared adult learners.
- Colleges should implement their programs and build in activities that can help to achieve this momentum. Who needs to hear about this work in order to help sustain it? How can we get key stakeholders involved? What evaluation data will be needed to demonstrate effectiveness?

7. Data Collection, Reporting, and Evaluation. Colleges must collect key indicators for MI-BEST students and report these on a regular basis in the process and timeline determined by MCCB.

- All MI-BEST students must receive a **unique ID/tracking #** for auditing and evaluation purposes. (MCCB will provide additional information on the assignment of these IDs.)
    - The **Admissions Compliance Code** for all MI-BEST students must be set to "MI-BEST" **audit code "E"** for reimbursement purposes
- Colleges will track metrics to inform grant outcomes and demonstrate program effectiveness. The college must designate an individual(s) who will be responsible for collecting data, submitting it to MCCB, and generating reports.
- **At a minimum, the following metrics will be tracked, though additional measures may be added to support overall program evaluation:**
    - Total number of participants enrolled each semester;
    - Total unique number of participants served each semester;
    - Total number of participants completing the prescribed MI-BEST pathway each semester;
    - Total number of participants still retained in their pathway each semester;
    - Number of students earning a high school equivalency diploma each semester;

- Total number of participants completing at least fifteen (15) credit hours toward a post-secondary degree (for CTE programs) or ALL AVAILABLE credit hours toward a postsecondary degree (for Workforce programs);
- Total number of participants earning a national/industry-recognized credential in their chosen pathway;
- Total number of participants enrolled in further education after pathway completion;
- Total number of participants employed in their chosen field after pathway completion;
- Total number of participants retained in employment after pathway completion;
- Total number of participants employed at enrollment who received a wage increase post-enrollment;
- Average earnings of participants employed in their field after pathway completion; and
- Average wage gains of participants employed in their field after pathway completion.

- Colleges are strongly encouraged to analyze the data they collect to support continuous program improvement. Engagement of institutional research staff to support these efforts is strongly encouraged.
- Colleges must participate fully in the independent evaluation to be conducted on the MI-BEST initiative, potentially including interviews; policy assessments; data requests; submission of materials developed as a result of this initiative; and other information as requested. Colleges must also host periodic site visits for the evaluation team, funders, or partners.
    - MCCB will select a program evaluator by April 2016 to begin conducting a rigorous, independent evaluation prior to the beginning of program Year 2.

III. APPLICATION INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES

A. Eligibility

MI-BEST eligibility is restricted to the fifteen public community and junior colleges in Mississippi. Proprietary (for profit) schools are not eligible to receive MI-BEST funding.

B. Expected Award Amount

Each college grantee is expected to receive $200,000 per year over three years, for a total of $600,000, provided a reasonable project proposal is submitted and approved and the college makes satisfactory progress in implementation each year. MCCB reserves the right to reduce and/or terminate MI-BEST funding for non-compliance and/or unsatisfactory project performance.

Funding will be provided to the colleges on a cost-reimbursement basis. MI-BEST funding comes from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation grant and is matched by the Workforce Enhancement Training (WET) Fund.

C. Implementation Period

The MI-BEST initiative implementation periods are as follows:

Year 1: September 1, 2015 through August 31, 2016
Year 2: September 1, 2016 through August 31, 2017
Year 3: September 1, 2017 through August 31, 2018

The above implementation/funding periods are subject to change, if necessary, but in no case will college have less than a 12-month budget period.

D. Number of Awards

This Request for Application (RFA) does not set a minimum or maximum number of awards. All fifteen community and junior colleges are strongly encouraged to apply and participate in the MI-BEST initiative.

E. Formatting

The **MI-BEST application narrative** is limited to **fifteen (15) or less single-spaced pages with one-inch margins using an 11-point, Times New Roman or Calibri font**.

All pages must be numbered and include the college's name in a header. Attachments are limited to fifteen (15) pages or less. The budget justification does not count against the narrative page limit.

F. Inquiries

Inquiries should be submitted in writing to Kenneth Wheatley at **kwheatley@mccb.edu**. Responses to inquires will be made in the MI-BEST Application FAQ, which can be found at http://www.mccb.edu/ResDev/RdDefault.aspx. This document should be consulted frequently in the application development process for any updates or clarifications.

G. Submission and Application Deadline

Applicants must submit the MI-BEST application electronically in **MS Word** and **PDF**. Include your college's name in the MS Word and PDF file names.

The application deadline is December 4, 2015, 5:00 PM CST. However, applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until the deadline. Late applications will not be accepted.

Submit applications electronically to the following persons:

Kenneth Wheatley
kwheatley@mccb.edu

Nikitna Barnes
nbarnes@mccb.edu

The email subject line must state: **MI-BEST Application for [Insert Name of Your College]**

No mailed, hand delivered, or faxed applications will be accepted for this Request for Applications (RFA).

Applications must address all criteria requested to be considered complete. MCCB staff may seek clarification from the applicant at any time, and failure to respond within a reasonable time frame may result in rejection of this application.

MCCB anticipates conducting a bidders' conference in conjunction with this RFA to provide answers and technical assistance to colleges. MCCB may elect to conduct the meeting via electronic means.This conference will be tentatively scheduled during the last week of October 2015. Additional details are forthcoming.

IV. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

See **Appendix 9** for the **MI-BEST Application Checklist**.

A. Cover Page

Please include the signed **MI-BEST Cover Page** as the first page of your application. *(See **Appendix 10** for Cover Page template.)* The cover page does not count toward the 15-page limit for proposal narratives or the 15-page limit for attachments.

B. Program Approval Page

Please include the **MI-BEST Program Approval Page** as the second page of your application. *(See **Appendix 11** for MI-BEST Program Approval Page template.)* The Program Approval Page does not count toward the 15-page limit for proposal narratives or the 15-page limit for attachments.

C. Proposal Narrative

1. Policy Changes. Please describe the policy changes needed to support the effective implementation of the MI-BEST initiative and the success of its students at your college.

a. What institutional policy changes have you made, or will you make in the first 60-90 days of MI-BEST program launch, to ensure that students without a high school diploma or equivalency credential can enter into credit-bearing CTE or non-credit Workforce programs?

b. Please identify any policies at the institutional or state level that need to be developed, changed, or clarified to enhance your MI-BEST program success.

2. College Implementation Team (CIT). Please identify your Implementation Team and describe its function.

a. Please list the members of your College Implementation Team and their roles. *(See **Appendix 12** for College Implementation Team template. Show this as **Attachment A**.)*
b. Note whether your college will develop a new team or utilize an existing committee structure.
c. Note the frequency of team meetings and who will coordinate the efforts of this team as it relates to the MI-BEST initiative.
d. Please provide the resumes for the Project Coordinator and the Student Navigator. If these staffs have not been hired, then please provide position descriptions. *(Show this as **Attachment B**.)*

3. Identifying High-Demand Integrated Career Pathways. Please describe the CTE or Workforce pathways in which your college will develop integrated career pathways.

For each CTE or Workforce pathway:

a. Please provide evidence of strong local and regional demand and potential for family-sustaining wages as compared to the living wage or other income standard. *(Include verification of where this information can be located— such as a copy of the information, screenshot, or link. Show as **Attachment C**.)*
b. Indicate if the proposed integrated pathway program aligns with a MCCB-approved CTE or Workforce program of study. (**Note:** You will list the specific courses from the program of study on the Program Approval form.)
c. Describe how you have determined student interest in this pathway and why your college thinks it will be attractive to MI-BEST students.
d. Describe the CTE/Workforce program capacity and how many MI-BEST students will be enrolled in the pathway each year. Discuss whether MI-BEST students will be integrated into mixed classes with non-MI-BEST students or will form their own class.
e. If the CTE/Workforce program is already high-demand (e.g. welding), then describe how the college will ensure that there are sufficient "slots" for MI-BEST students.

4. Implementing Your Integrated Career Pathways. Please describe how your college will implement your MI-BEST programs, including:

a. **Recruitment strategies.** Please describe your recruitment strategies.
   1. How many potential participants will the college reach out to in order to get into the desired pool? (Note: Three times the desired number is a good rule of thumb.)
   2. What potential people/groups will you target?
   3. Where and/or how will you reach them?
   4. What partner organizations will assist with recruitment and/or referrals?

5. Whose job will it be to follow-up with interested persons and guide them to the next step in the intake process?

b. **Intake approach.** Please describe your intake process.
1. How will your college ensure that the students selected are the best match for your program?
2. How will your college help interested students select the right career pathway?
3. What assessments will be offered to students? (**Note:** TABE pre- & post-testing is mandatory for all recruited students)
4. What information will be collected at intake?
5. How will you inform students about program expectations of them and program/college services to support them? Will students be required to sign a contract indicating their commitment to the program?
Note: MCCB strongly encourages colleges to require student commitments to complete the MI-BEST baseline outcomes by requiring students to sign a commitment contract.

c. **Instructional approach.** Please describe your instructional approach.
1. **In each integrated career pathway**, what form of team teaching will you be implementing: **a)** Traditional Team Teaching; **b)** Collaborative Teaching; **c)** Complementary/Supportive Team Teaching; **d)** Parallel Instruction; **e)** Differentiated Split Class; or **f)** Monitoring Teacher?
2. How much instructional overlap will you provide for **each integrated pathway**? (**Note: 25% minimum overlap is required.**)
3. How will you select and train your team teachers? How will you ensure that team teachers are engaged in collaborative planning and shared responsibility for student success? How will you ensure that team teachers are working together well and what actions will you take if they are not?
4. What contextualized curricula will you use? Who will develop it?
5. Will an additional HSE prep or support class be offered (outside team teaching)? What barriers do students face in passing the HSE and how do you plan to address them? When are students expected to complete this credential?
6. Describe how you will ensure that students obtain the HSE along with their occupational credential, including use of the **HSE Completion Incentive** noted below.
7. How will your college strengthen the college readiness of MI-BEST students so they can be prepared for the next stage of the pathway?

d. **Connections to programs of study.** Please illustrate how your MI-BEST program connects to approved programs of study.
1. Attach a career pathways graphic f**or each integrated career pathway** that outlines educational progression through approved MCCB programs of study (for CTE programs) or demonstrates how national, industry-based credentials can "stack" and connect students to CTE programs of study (for Workforce programs). The **Infographic** must also

show the specific credentials and degrees to be attained, along with multiple entry and exit points (including jobs available at each exit point), and wage/salary levels. *(See **Appendix 4** for the Career Pathways infographic template. Show as **Attachment D**.)*

2. Workforce programs must attach a copy of the curriculum leading to a relevant national, industry-based credential for their selected occupational program. ***(Show as Attachment E)***

e. **Acceleration strategies.** Please describe your program acceleration strategies.

1. Besides team teaching, what additional strategies will your college use to accelerate skills acquisition and reduce time to completion?

2. If you have an existing **Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) policy**, how will your college use it to capture relevant knowledge already gained by your MI-BEST students and award credit for it?

- *Please complete the student PLA request process flowchart. See **Appendix 7** for the **flowchart template** and show as **Attachment F**.*
- *Please attach college **PLA policy**, if it exists, and show as **Attachment G**.*

3. If you do not have a PLA policy or need to update it, discuss how you will develop or revise the policy within the first six months of project implementation?

f. **Supportive services.** Please describe the supportive services you will offer.

1. What intrusive counseling and supportive services will you provide to your students to help them attain their academic and career goals?

2. What role will your Student Navigator and other MI-BEST staff play in supporting students?

3. What additional supports will you leverage from other college student support services or from external partners?

4. How will you ensure that MI-BEST students receive the same privileges as other college students (student IDS, use of computer labs, library, etc.)?

5. How will you develop, in the first six months of MI-BEST program launch, a resource manual of resources and services in the area available for students? (Note: Resource Manuals must be updated each semester, as needed).

g. **Work-based learning opportunities**. Please describe the work-based learning opportunities you will provide for **each integrated career pathway program**.

h. **Employability or life skills.** Please describe how your college will provide at least 20 contact hours of employability/life skills training to your MI-BEST students.

1. On what employability/life skills topics will you provide skills training?

2. Describe how you will ensure that these skills are what employers are seeking.

3. Describe how you will help students demonstrate their mastery of these skills.

4. Describe what financial literacy/planning services you (or a partner organization) will provide to help students prepare to better maximize the increased incomes they gain as they get new skills and better jobs?

i. **Award of credit.** Please describe how your college will handle award of credit.
1. What steps will you take to ensure that credits are transcripted for each student at the time of successful course completion?
2. How will you ensure that students in Workforce programs who complete industry-based credentials can use the PLA to obtain appropriate semester credit hours before exiting the program?

j. **"Next Step" assistance.** Please describe how you will help MI-BEST students get placed in jobs and/or continue their higher education.
1. What information will you provide about these opportunities to help students decide between available options?
2. What academic and nonacademic supports will students receive to help them advance along their career pathway?
3. What follow-up assistance will you provide to students after they move into jobs?

k. **Adult-learner friendly approach.** Please describe how your college will ensure that your MI-BEST program is flexibly implemented to meet the needs of nontraditional students.
1. What courses or services will you offer on evenings or weekends to better accommodate the needs of adult learners?
2. In what other ways will you address the needs of nontraditional students?
3. Discuss and provide an example of class schedules for each integrated career pathway program.

l. **Partnerships with employers and other organizations.** Please describe how external partners will be engaged in the implementation of your MI-BEST programs.
1. How have local or regional business partners been involved in the planning of your MI-BEST program to ensure that it aligns with their needs?
2. What support will employers provide during implementation?
   - ***Note:* Please attach *support letters from at least two (2)* employer partners per pathway.** *Show as* ***Attachment H****.*
3. What other workforce and/or community partners will your college engage and what specific roles are they playing or contributing to your project?
   - ***Note:* Please attach *support letters* from these community partners.** *Show as* ***Attachment I****.*

5. Strategic Communications and Dissemination. Please describe the strategies your college will use to inform internal and external stakeholders about the progress and success of your MI-BEST program and its students.

a. What existing college communications mechanisms will you use to share positive results?

b. What new communications strategies will you develop to share progress and success?
c. What key stakeholders do you need to engage to get buy-in for your MI-BEST program?
d. How will you celebrate the accomplishments of MI-BEST students?

Note: Please refer to guidance instructions regarding references to the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

6. Capacity Building and Professional Development. Please describe your technical assistance needs and program strengths.

a. To help MCCB plan technical assistance activities to better support your work, please identify any capacity building or professional development needs that you anticipate having in the implementation of your MI-BEST program.
b. In the spirit of peer learning and sharing best practices, please list any strengths or assets related to MI-BEST implementation that your college can share with peer institutions.

7. Sustainability Planning. Please describe your plans to sustain the MI-BEST project beyond the grant period.

a. What are examples of how institutional or other funding or resources will be leveraged to support the ongoing sustainability of the MI-BEST initiative at your college, including anticipated sources and amounts?

8. Data Collection and Reporting. Please describe your approach to data collection and reporting.

a. How will your MI-BEST program ensure quality, accurate and timely data collection and reporting?
b. Who will be responsible for data collection?

Note: Colleges will be expected to use data on program and student performance to improve the implementation of your MI-BEST program.

D. Budget

1. ***Budget Requirements.*** Colleges must submit a detailed budget justification capturing all sources of funding that will be used to support the MI-BEST initiative at their colleges over the 3-year period. **Note:** Colleges may request budget modifications during each project year only when necessary.

    - The budget justification does not count against the 15-page narrative limited or the 15-page attachment limit.
    - Applicants may apply for up to $200,000 per year from MI-BEST.

2. **Leveraged/Braided Funding Requirement.** Colleges must identify and list the specific funding source(s) and amounts for all leveraged funds for each year of the three-year project period.

    Note: Colleges are must braid/leverage funding from multiple sources to support MI-BEST students and expand the program to other eligible students who can benefit from the integrated pathway approach. Because understanding program costs more completely is an important consideration in

ongoing program sustainability, colleges must demonstrate how they plan to leverage additional federal (e.g. WIOA ABE and training funds, Ability to Benefit, etc.), state (e.g. FTE reimbursement, Basic Skills, etc.), local (e.g. foundation grants, donations from business partners, etc.), and/or other funds to support MI-BEST. Colleges should provide a reliable estimation of leveraged/braided funds.

Note: **MCCB Policy 9.2** allows for FTE reimbursement for students enrolled in MI-BEST, even if they do not have a high school credential. This FTE funding will be distributed the year after a FTE audit of enrolled MI-BEST students.

Note: Colleges must use the attached Excel template to present the project budget. **Show as Attachment J**.

- Worksheet 1 captures the summary budget.
- Worksheet 2 captures the individual line item breakdowns and cost justifications.

3. Use of Funds. MI-BEST funds can be used flexibly to cover implementation of the integrated career pathway programs, with the following caveats:

- **Staffing:**
  - Applicants must budget for at least one (1) full-time Student Navigator.
  - Applicants must budget for a project coordinator, which may be less than full-time. If the project coordinator position is split, then applicants must identify the percentage of time paid through MI-BEST funds and other funds. Ideally, there would be at least a 25% time commitment on MI-BEST for the Project Coordinator.
  - Applicants must list the full salary and fringe benefit amounts for all positions listed under personnel by identifying the funding source(s) and amount(s) for each requested position to be paid from MI-BEST funds.

- **Student Support:**

  - MI-BEST funds may be utilized to satisfy the **Ability to Benefit (ATB)** six (6) credit hours or 225 clock hours requirement toward a degree or certificate under the **Pell Grant** provisions cited in **DCL GEN-15-09.**
  - Only currently enrolled MI-BEST students are eligible for childcare reimbursement costs. Colleges may only request childcare reimbursement for use of state-approved, licensed childcare facilities. Colleges with on-campus childcare facilities may receive reimbursement for MI-BEST student childcare costs provided that the facility is a currently state-approved, licensed childcare facility.
  - Support services such as gas cards, transportation assistance, and childcare reimbursements must be limited to students with satisfactory attendance as determined by the colleges.
  - **Colleges must set aside $200 ($5,000 per year) to provide a HSE Completion Incentive to encourage students to complete their HSE. The completion incentive must be written into the student contracts.**

- **Training and Professional Development:**
  - Colleges must budget for the participation of at least two (2) Campus Implementation Team members to attend face-to-face statewide implementation team meetings at least 2-3 times a year.

- **Equipment:**
  - Colleges must give a very thorough justification for why proposed equipment is needed, the proposed costs, and why it must be purchased with MI-BEST funds.
  - Equipment is considered as anything having a unit cost of $1,000 or more.
  - **Note:** Colleges must not supplant local, state, or federal funds. In summary, colleges shall not request MI-BEST funding for any personnel, equipment, supplies, or other services for which you are already budgeted for under a preexisting funding source.

- **Indirect Costs:**
  - Indirect costs are limited to 5% of the total grant award per year.

- **Other:**
  - Colleges must budget for support services using MI-BEST funds.
  - MI-BEST funds may not be used for construction or renovation costs.
  - MI-BEST funds may not be used to purchase automobiles/vehicles.
  - Colleges may not budget funds for local evaluation activities.

- **Non Supplanting Requirement:**
  - **Colleges may not use the grants awarded under this RFA to replace local, state, or federal funds. The use of MI-BEST funding must be for the initiation of new services or to supplement and/or enhance, expand, or increase existing initiatives or services, in accordance with program requirements.**

- **Allowable Costs:**
  - **MCCB reserves the right to disallow budget requests deemed unresponsive to program requirements and intent. While colleges are free to propose a budget to support the proposed activities, such costs must be allowable, reasonable, and allocable to the MI-BEST grant.**

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: RESOURCES FOR VERIFYING LABOR MARKET DEMAND

Colleges may access:

- Traditional Labor Market Data
  - MS Department of Employment Security: http://mdes.ms.gov
  - SWIB Board: http://swib.ms.gov
- National Strategic Planning and Analysis Research Center (nSPARC): www.lifetracks.ms.gov
- Industry data
- Trade Association Data

Colleges may also utilize online services such as:

- Bureau of Labor Statistics: www.bls.gov
- CareerOneStop: www.careeronestop.org
- mySkillsmyFuture: www.myskillsmyfuture.org
- MyNextMove: www.mynextmove.org
- O*NET Online: www.onetonline.org
- TORQ:htt[://www.torqworks.com
- EMSI (CareerCoach): http://www.economicmodeling.com/

Colleges may also utilize Real-Time LMI Vendors such as:

- Burning Glass Labor Insight / Focus Career www.burning-glass.com/
- Monster Government Solutions www.monstergovernmentsolutions.com
- CareerBuilder – Supply and Demand Portal (free for workforce entities) http://www.careerbuilder.com/JobPoster/Products/page.aspx?pagever=Supply
- Wanted Analytics http://www.wantedanalytics.com/
- Geographic Solutions https://www.geographicsolutions.com/index.asp
- Real-Time LMI Product Review: http://www.jff.org/sites/default/files/publications/VendorProductReview_041712.pdf

APPENDIX 2: RESOURCES ON LIVING WAGE

- For guidance on living wages, colleges may utilize Massachusetts Institute of Technology's (MIT) Living Wage Calculator located online at: http://livingwage.mit.edu/.

According to MIT- "The living wage is defined as the wage needed to cover basic family expenses (basic needs budget) plus all relevant taxes. The living wage calculation does not include publicly provided income or housing assistance. Values are reported in 2014 dollars. To convert values from annual to hourly, a work-year of 2,080 hours (52, 40 hour work weeks) is assumed."

For example, the following information is provided for Mississippi:

	Living Wage	Poverty Wage	Minimum Wage
1 Adult	**$9.95**	$5.00	$7.25
1 Adult & 1 Child	**$19.99**	$7.00	$7.25
1 Adult & 2 Children	**$23.87**	$9.00	$7.25
1 Adult & 3 Children	**$29.88**	$11.00	$7.25
2 Adults (One Working)	**$16.52**	$7.00	$7.25
2 Adults (One Working & 1 Child)	**$19.71**	$9.00	$7.25
2 Adults (One Working & 2 Children)	**$22.30**	$11.00	$7.25
2 Adults (One Working & 3 Children)	**$24.40**	$13.00	$7.25
2 Adults	**$8.26**	$3.00	$7.25
2 Adults & 1 Child	**$11.08**	$4.00	$7.25
2 Adults & 2 Children	**$13.28**	$5.00	$7.25
2 Adults & 3 Children	**$15.24**	$6.00	$7.25

Source: http://livingwage.mit.edu/states/28

- State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB)/MS LifeTracks also provides various reports on job growth and median hourly earnings at the following web address (click "Occupation" tab): http://swib.ms.gov/datacenter/

APPENDIX 3: CONNECTING YOUR INTEGRATED CAREER PATHWAYS TO MCCB-APPROVED PROGRAMS OF STUDY

For CTE Programs:	**For Workforce Programs:**
1. Determine the CTE or Workforce pathway your institution will use to develop integrated pathways. Be prepared to demonstrate (through the Career Pathways Map noted in **Appendix 4**) that this pathway has the potential to make students upwardly mobile, e.g. it offers stackable credentials leading to good paying jobs.	
• The CTE pathway must be aligned with the 15-30-45-60 credit hour framework. (If the program has MCCB approval, it has already developed the framework for educational and career progression.)	• The Workforce pathway must result in a national, industry-based credential that can be "stacked" and aligned with the appropriate CTE programs at your college or a neighboring community college.
• If this is a new CTE program at your institution: Seek MCCB approval through the regular program approval process prior to beginning your integrated pathway. The timeline for making submissions and getting Board approval can be found here: http://www.sbcjc.cc.ms.us/pdfs/ct/EventsSchedule.pdf. For questions, please contact Valeria Williams, MCCB Director of Career and Technical Education, at **vwilliams@mccb.edu**.	

• If this is an existing CTE program at your institution, check to see if it has an Accelerated Career Pathway option (15 credit hours). Twenty CTE programs already have this option and MCCB is working with the colleges to add others. Curriculum guides for approved programs can be found at: **http://www.mccb.edu/OCI/currdownload.aspx**
  • If yes, use the Accelerated Career Pathway option, with its already designated courses, credit hours, and credentials, to develop your integrated pathway program.
  • If not, map out an Accelerated Career Pathway framework of 15 credit hours. (See Step 2 below.) **Note:** This will constitute a new program that will need Board approval prior to implementation. (See information about Board approval above.)	

2. Identify the courses to be incorporated into the MI-BEST integrated career pathway.	
• If the Accelerated Career Pathway exists, use the courses in this 15-hour framework to develop the integrated pathway.	• Identify the national, industry-based credential that you will pursue for this integrated career pathway. • Identify the workforce courses that will prepare students to attain this industry-based credential.
• If no Accelerated Career Pathway currently exists, select credit courses from the existing career certificate program of study (30 credit hours) that add up to at least 15 credits. Colleges should select introductory courses from the 30-hour framework, if possible.	

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- **Note:** Given the specific skills and competencies needed to obtain industry-based certifications, Accelerated Career Pathway options do not currently exist for allied health occupations and should not be developed as described above.
- In the short-term, colleges seeking to focus on health-related programs should align their MI-BEST integrated career pathway with the 30-credit hour career certificate, if it is currently available.

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<tr><td colspan="2">3. Identify the appropriate industry credentials that students will pursue as part of the Accelerated Career Pathway/MI-BEST integrated career pathway. (The Career Readiness Certificate will be offered in addition to these credentials.)</td></tr>
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- If an Accelerated Career Pathway option exists, colleges should use the credentials associated with that pathway option for their MI-BEST program.

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- See Step 2 above.

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- If an Accelerated Career Pathway option does not exist, colleges should choose from other MCCB-approved credentials for this CTE pathway.

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- Colleges should ensure that the national, industry-based credential can be aligned with the appropriate CTE program, including award of credit from these credentials through prior learning assessments.

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- Colleges may also add other credentials, as appropriate, to their program of study such as ServSafe, OSHA 10, etc.

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Other Considerations:

- Colleges should pay close attention to whether their MI-BEST integrated pathway program utilizing CTE pathways represents a substantive change (new program, new CTE courses, etc.) that requires prior SACS notification and/or approval. Please review the Substantive Change document (**http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/SubstantiveChange.pdf**), especially pages 6-10, which outline what actions are required for different kinds of changes. **Note:** *For questions, please contact Angela Bryan, MCCB Director of Curriculum and Instruction, at abryan@mccb.edu*.
- All credits awarded for PLA must be in accordance with **SACS Standard 3.4.4** Colleges are strongly encouraged to include registrars in the PLA policy planning and implementation process.

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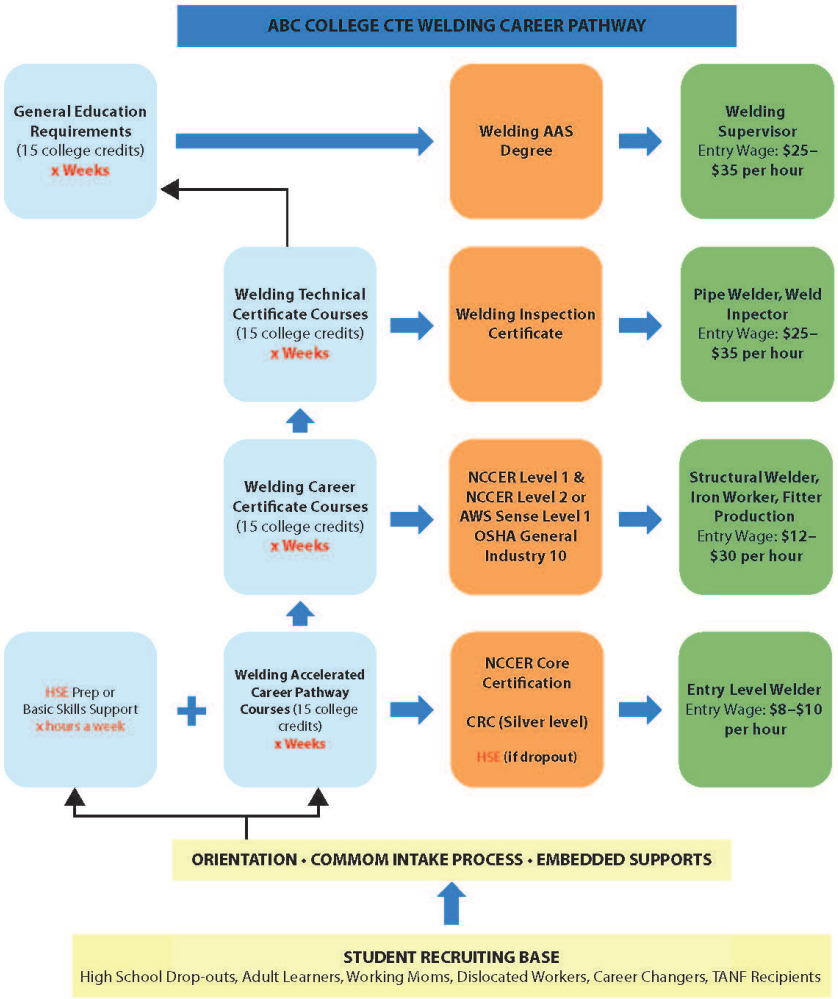
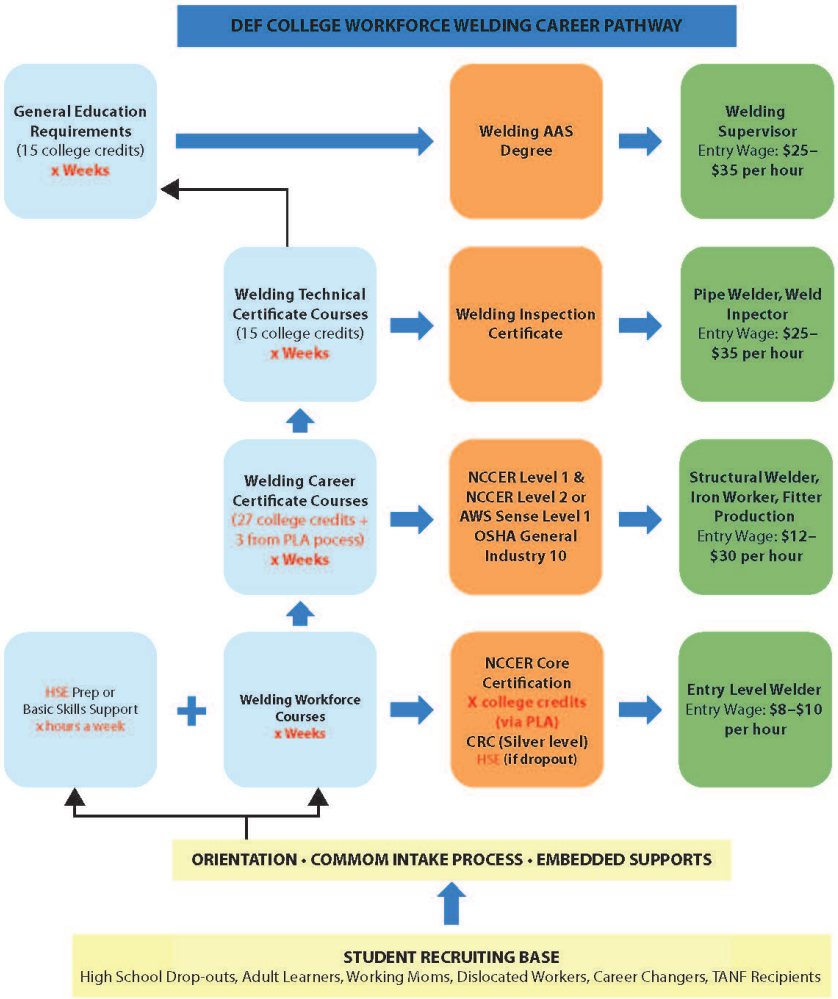
APPENDIX 4: CAREER PATHWAYS INFOGRAPHIC TEMPLATE
(Show as Attachment D)




DEF COLLEGE WORKFORCE WELDING CAREER PATHWAY
General Education Requirements
(15 college credits)
x Weeks
Welding AAS Degree
Welding Supervisor
Entry Wage: $25–$35 per hour
Welding Technical Certificate Courses
(15 college credits)
x Weeks
Welding Inspection Certificate
Pipe Welder, Weld Inpector
Entry Wage: $25–$35 per hour
Welding Career Certificate Courses
(27 college credits + 3 from PLA pocess)
x Weeks
NCCER Level 1 & NCCER Level 2 or AWS Sense Level 1 OSHA General Industry 10
Structural Welder, Iron Worker, Fitter Production
Entry Wage: $12–$30 per hour
HSE Prep or Basic Skills Support
x hours a week
Welding Workforce Courses
x Weeks
NCCER Core Certification
X college credits (via PLA)
CRC (Silver level)
HSE (if dropout)
Entry Level Welder
Entry Wage: $8–$10 per hour
ORIENTATION • COMMOM INTAKE PROCESS • EMBEDDED SUPPORTS
STUDENT RECRUITING BASE
High School Drop-outs, Adult Learners, Working Moms, Dislocated Workers, Career Changers, TANF Recipients

APPENDIX 5: RESOURCES ON WORK-BASED LEARNING

Work-based learning is a great opportunity to help MI-BEST students apply the technical and employability skills they are learning, while building work experience and developing relationships with employers who might hire them when their program is complete.

Below are some resources colleges might find useful in developing their work-based learning programs:

California Center for College and Career:
http://www.connectedcalifornia.org/curriculum/work_based_learning

Jobs for the Future: http://www.jff.org/publications/work-based-learning-toolkit-resources-jobs-careers

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities: http://www.iseek.org/education/whatworkbased.html

National Council for Workforce Education: http://gulfcoastittraining.com/documentation/career-services-training-documentation/

Note: Tentative plans include expanding work under this component in the coming months through the provision of additional training and technical assistance. Colleges will be expected to participate in expanded work-based learning and employer engagement activities.

APPENDIX 6: RESOURCES ON PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENTS

If they do not already exist, colleges must establish and implement **Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) policies** within the first six months of Year 1.

> PLA validates knowledge acquired through life experience, work experience, military experience, civic engagement, individual study and reading, and participation in classes or training sponsored by business and industry, professional organizations or government agencies. Credit is awarded for college-level knowledge gained from experience and not for the experience itself.

All credits awarded for PLA must be in accordance with **SACS Standard 3.4.4** Colleges are strongly encouraged to include registrars in the PLA policy planning and implementation process.

Colleges must include challenge exams or other mechanisms to award credit for prior learning to help reduce time to completion for CTE students and as part of any Workforce (noncredit) integrated career pathway program they are developing. Students should take these exams before exiting the integrated pathway program to ensure that any credits available by PLA are earned in the current semester.

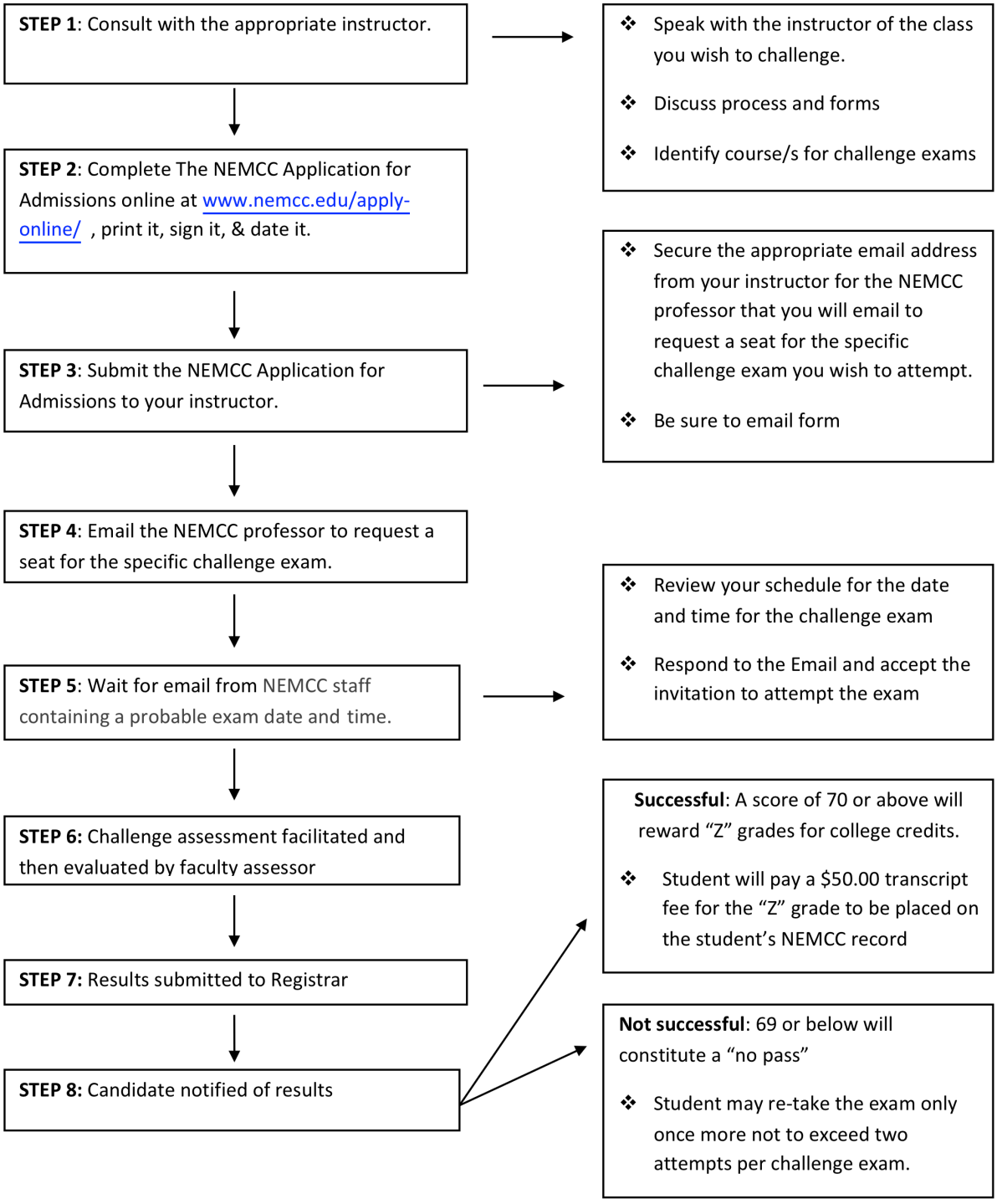
Colleges may utilize the Credit by Examination crosswalks available in many of the Curriculum Frameworks for various CTE courses. (See MCCB Curriculum Download page at http://www.mccb.edu/OCI/currdownload.aspx) These crosswalks map out which industry-based credentials might indicate knowledge and skills gained for which courses and the potential PLA credits available.

If the crosswalk does not exist for your selected career pathway, the college must develop and approve a crosswalk to ensure that students get all available credits from the achievement of their industry recognized credential.

Here are some resources on Prior Learning Assessments developed by the National College Transitions Network (NCTN) for the *Gulf Coast IT Consortium*, a TAACCCT funded project including 5 MS Colleges: http://gulfcoastittraining.com/documentation/prior-learning-assessment-documentation/

APPENDIX 7: FLOWCHART ON STUDENT PLA REQUEST PROCESS

Sample Request Procedure for Challenge Exam Flowchart (Northeast MS Community College)



APPENDIX 8: RESOURCES ON SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING

While most colleges, if awarded, will just be launching MI-BEST pathways, it is important to begin to think about how to sustain and scale these programs from the outset.

Below are some resources to support colleges in considering strategies for sustainability planning:

Utah State University: http://extension.usu.edu/htm/publications/publication=15028

US Department of Labor: http://www.doleta.gov/business/sustainability_toolkit.cfm

APPENDIX 9: CHECKLIST OF REQUIRED INFORMATION FOR MI-BEST APPLICATION

	SECTION OF COLLEGE APPLICATION	RFA SECTION THAT ADDRESSES THIS COMPONENT
	COVER PAGES	
	Application Cover Page (with required signatures)	Section IV A.; Appendix 10
	Program Approval Page (for each MI-BEST integrated career pathway proposed)	Section IV B: Appendix 11
	NARRATIVE	
	Proposal Narrative (15-page limit)	Section IV C: 1-8
	ATTACHMENTS	
	Attachment A: College Implementation Team Template	Appendix 12
	Attachment B: Resumes for Project Coordinator and Student Navigator (Or position descriptions if they have yet to be hired)	Section IV C: 1
	Attachment C: Verification of Labor Market Demand	Section IV C: 3a
	Attachment D: Career Pathway Infographics (for each MI-BEST program proposed)	Section IV C: 4d; Appendix 4
	Attachment E: Curricula for Workforce Programs	Section IV C: 4d
	Attachment F: Flowchart of Student PLA Request Process (if college has PLA policy)	Section IV C: 4e; Appendix 7
	Attachment G: College PLA policy (if college has one)	Section IV C: 4f
	Attachment H: Support Letters from Employer Partners (at least two per occupational pathway)	Section IV C: 4l
	Attachment I: Support Letters from Other External Partners	Section IV C: 4l
	Attachment J: Budget	Section IV D; Appendix 13

APPENDIX 10: MI-BEST PATHWAY APPLICATION COVER PAGE

1. CONTACT PERSON FOR COLLEGE SUBMITTING THE PROPOSAL

Name:		**Phone:**	
Title:		**Email:**	
College:			
Address:			
Date:			

2. COLLEGE LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT

We, the undersigned, have read this application and commit to engaging in this college-level initiative to reform our adult basic education and community college systems to better support more effective transitions to postsecondary education for ABE students and greater attainment of credit-bearing certificates and degrees and employment outcomes. We will participate fully in this MI-BEST implementation process and/or designate high-level staff with decision-making authority to bring the resources of my organization and/or department to the table to visibly support this effort, strengthen working relationships with other internal and external partners, and repurpose funding or other resources to support our implementation plan.

Must be signed by: [Add additional lines as needed]

President of College

_____ _____

Signature Name

Vice President for Academic Affairs/Chief Academic Officer

_____ _____

Signature Name

Dean or Director of CTE or Workforce Program to Be Included in MI-BEST

_____ _____

Signature Name

Dean or Director of CTE or Workforce Program to Be Included in MI-BEST

_____ _____

Signature Name

Adult Education/Basic Skills Director

_____ _____

Signature Name

College Student Support Services Director

_____ _____

Signature Name

MI-BEST Project Coordinator (if hired)

_____ _____

Signature Name

MI-BEST Student Navigator (if hired)

_____ _____

Signature Name

APPENDIX 11: MI-BEST PROGRAM APPROVAL FORM

Please complete a separate form for each proposed MI-BEST pathway. At least two (2) pathways are required, and one (1) must be a college-level, credit-bearing CTE pathway.

	Name of Integrated Pathway
What is the CIP Code associated with the occupational pathway?	
Is this a CTE or Workforce pathway?	
If a CTE pathway, is this an existing, MCCB-approved program at the college? (Yes/No)*	
On which campus(es) will the MI-BEST program be offered?*	
If a CTE program, does this program of study have a MCCB-Approved Accelerated Career Pathway Option? (Yes/No)	
What are specific CTE or Workforce course names and numbers to be included in the integrated pathway? • If a CTE program, please identify these from the Curriculum Framework for CTE programs as noted in **Appendix 3**). • If a Workforce program, please list the Workforce courses to be offered that lead to a national, industry-based credential for this pathway.	
What is the MI-BEST Program Start Date? (Colleges are expected to begin offering MI-BEST programs and courses in January 2016.)	
What is the length of the MI-BEST program?	
What are the minimum entrance requirements (TABE scores) for this pathway? (**Note:** See table in Section II)	
How many college level credits will students earn in the integrated pathway? • CTE programs must provide a minimum of 15 college level, career pathways credits. • Workforce programs must provide all available college level, career pathway credits that can be attained for the industry-based credential through Prior Learning Assessments.	
What credentials will students earn at the end of the integrated career pathway? • For CTE programs, these must be MCCB-approved credentials as noted in **Appendix 3**. • For Workforce programs, these must be national, industry-recognized credentials.	
How many students will be served in the pathway (over the 3-year period)?	

***NOTE:** If the CTE program at the college from which the MI-BEST program will be developed represents a new program at the college or a new location for an existing program that has not been approved by the MS Community College Board, please obtain this approval before proceeding with development of the MI-BEST program.

In the career pathways infographic noted in **Appendix 4**, please provide information on jobs to be attained by program completers and salary/wage levels.

Official Use	Mississippi Community College Board	
Approved	☐	Date ___/____/___
Disapproved	☐	Date ___/____/___
Other	☐	Date ___/____/___

Action by the MCCB

APPENDIX 12: COLLEGE IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

(Show as Attachment A)

NAME	TITLE	DIVISIONS/DEPARTMENT /ORGANIZATION	MI-BEST PROJECT ROLE

APPENDIX 13: MI-BEST BUDGET TEMPLATE

Please see attached Excel spreadsheet.

MI-BEST PATHWAY APPLICATION COVER PAGE

1. CONTACT PERSON FOR COLLEGE SUBMITTING THE PROPOSAL

Name:		**Phone:**	
Title:		**Email:**	
College:			
Address:			
Date:			

2. COLLEGE LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT

We, the undersigned, have read this application and commit to engaging in this college-level initiative to reform our adult basic education and community college systems to better support more effective transitions to postsecondary education for ABE students and greater attainment of credit-bearing certificates and degrees and employment outcomes. We will participate fully in this MI-BEST implementation process and/or designate high-level staff with decision-making authority to bring the resources of my department and/or my organization to the table to visibly support this effort, strengthen working relationships with other internal and external partners, and repurpose funding or other resources to support our implementation plan.

Must be signed by: [Add additional lines as needed]

President of College

_____ _____

Signature Name

Vice President for Academic Affairs/Chief Academic Officer

_____ _____

Signature Name

Dean or Director of CTE or Workforce Program to Be Included in MI-BEST

_____ _____

Signature Name

Dean or Director of CTE or Workforce Program to Be Included in MI-BEST

_____ _____

Signature Name

Adult Education/Basic Skills Director

_____ _____

Signature Name

College Student Support Services Director

_____ _____

Signature Name

MI-BEST Project Coordinator (if hired)

_____ _____

Signature Name

MI-BEST Student Navigator (if hired)

_____ _____

Signature Name

MI-BEST PROGRAM APPROVAL FORM

Please complete a separate form for each proposed MI-BEST pathway. At least two (2) pathways are required, and one (1) must be a college-level, credit-bearing CTE pathway.

	Name of Integrated Pathway
What is the CIP Code associated with the occupational pathway?	
Is this a CTE or Workforce pathway?	
If a CTE pathway, is this an existing, MCCB-approved program at the college? (Yes/No)*	
On what campus(es) will the MI-BEST program be offered?*	
If a CTE program, does this program of study have a MCCB-Approved Accelerated Career Pathway Option? (Yes/No)	
What are specific CTE or Workforce course names and numbers to be included in the integrated pathway? • If a CTE program, please identify these from the Curriculum Framework for CTE programs as noted in **Appendix 3**). • If a Workforce program, please list the Workforce courses to be offered that lead to a national, industry-based credential for this pathway.	
What is the MI-BEST Program Start Date? (Colleges are expected to begin offering MI-BEST programs and courses in January 2016.)	
What is the length of the MI-BEST program?	
What are the minimum entrance requirements (TABE scores) for this pathway? (**Note:** See table in Section II)	
How many college level credits will students earn in the integrated pathway? • CTE programs must provide a minimum of 15 college level, career pathways credits. • Workforce programs must provide all available college level, career pathway credits that can be attained for the industry-based credential through Prior Learning Assessments.	
What credentials will students earn at the end of the integrated career pathway? • For CTE programs, these must be MCCB-approved credentials as noted in **Appendix 3**. • For Workforce programs, these must be national, industry-recognized credentials.	
How many students will be served in the pathway (over the 3-year period)?	

***NOTE:** If the CTE program at the college from which the MI-BEST program will be developed represents a new program at the college or a new location for an existing program that has not been approved by the MS Community College Board, please obtain this approval before proceeding with development of the MI-BEST program.

In the career pathways infographic noted in **Appendix 4**, please provide information on jobs to be attained by program completers and salary/wage levels.

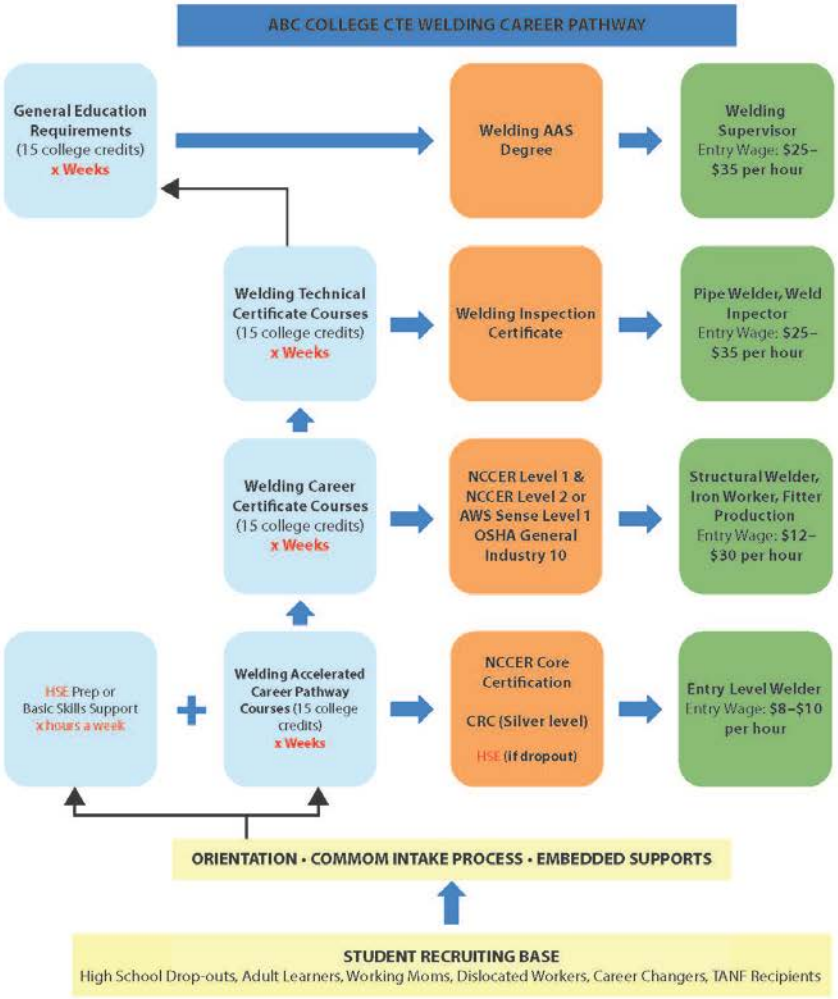
Official Use	Mississippi Community College Board		
Approved	☐	Date	___/___/___
Disapproved	☐	Date	___/___/___
Other	☐	Date	___/___/___

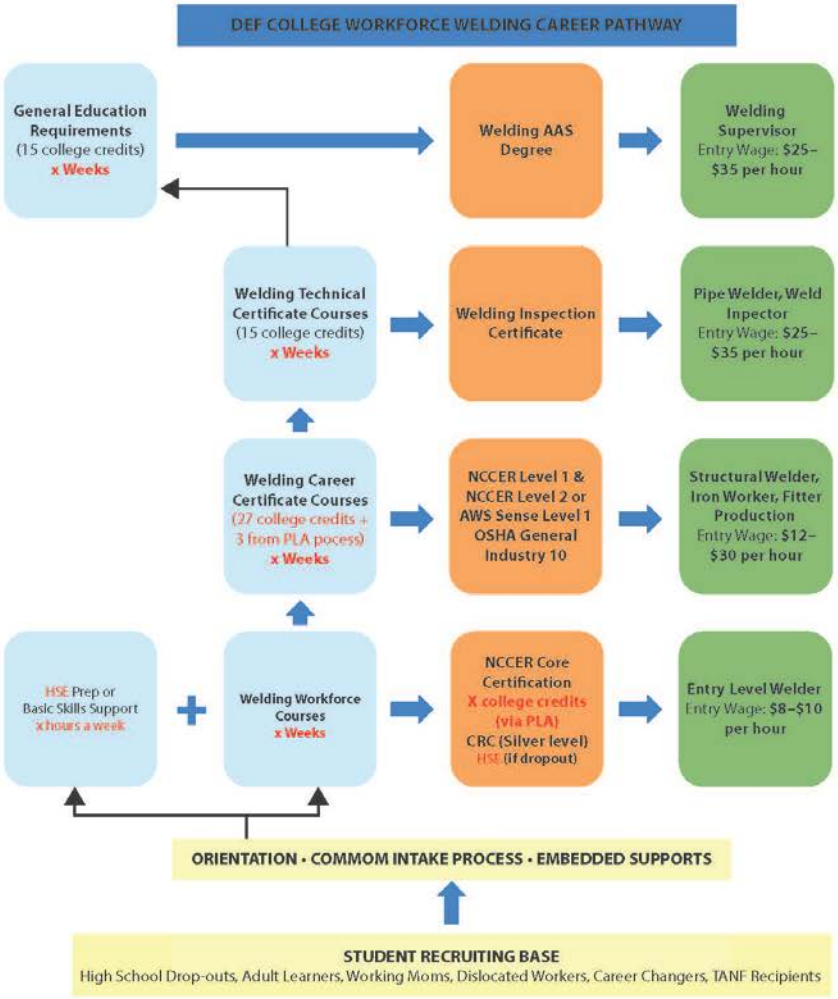
Action by the MCCB

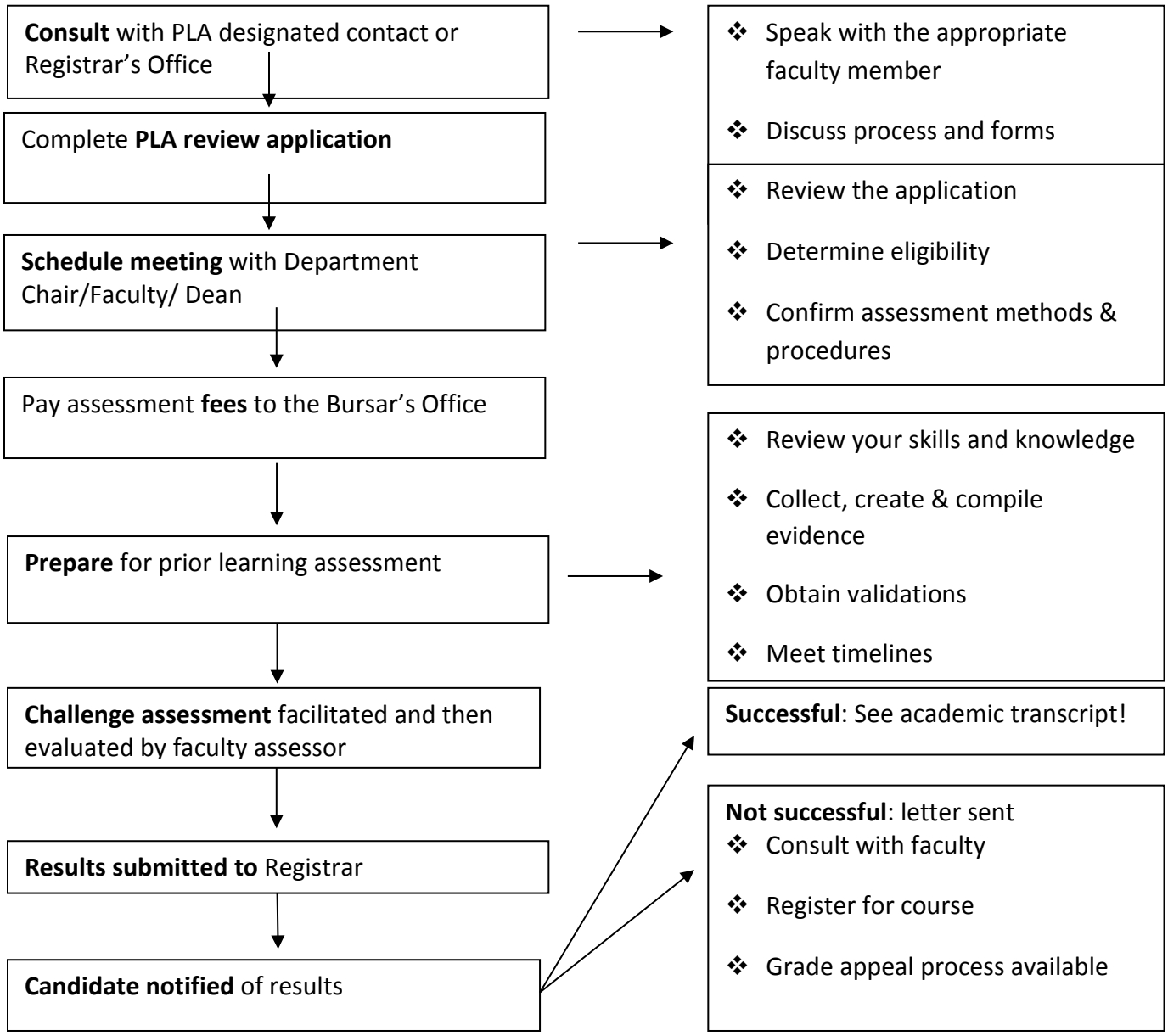
ATTACHMENT A: COLLEGE IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

NAME	TITLE	DIVISIONS/DEPARTMENT /ORGANIZATION	MI-BEST PROJECT ROLE

APPENDIX 4: CAREER PATHWAYS INFOGRAPHIC TEMPLATE
(Show as Attachment D)




DEF COLLEGE WORKFORCE WELDING CAREER PATHWAY
General Education Requirements
(15 college credits)
x Weeks
Welding AAS Degree
Welding Supervisor
Entry Wage: $25–$35 per hour
Welding Technical Certificate Courses
(15 college credits)
x Weeks
Welding Inspection Certificate
Pipe Welder, Weld Inpector
Entry Wage: $25–$35 per hour
Welding Career Certificate Courses
(27 college credits + 3 from PLA pocess)
x Weeks
NCCER Level 1 & NCCER Level 2 or AWS Sense Level 1 OSHA General Industry 10
Structural Welder, Iron Worker, Fitter Production
Entry Wage: $12–$30 per hour
HSE Prep or Basic Skills Support
x hours a week
Welding Workforce Courses
x Weeks
NCCER Core Certification
X college credits (via PLA)
CRC (Silver level)
HSE (if dropout)
Entry Level Welder
Entry Wage: $8–$10 per hour
ORIENTATION • COMMOM INTAKE PROCESS • EMBEDDED SUPPORTS
STUDENT RECRUITING BASE
High School Drop-outs, Adult Learners, Working Moms, Dislocated Workers, Career Changers, TANF Recipients

ATTACHMENT F: STUDENT REQUEST PROCEDURE FOR PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT (PLA)

A student who believes that he/she is qualified for college credit from learning earned through experience, previous training, military experience/training or noncredit coursework may request credit by examination. This request needs to be in alignment with the existing Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) policy of your institution. You will be able to find additional details about the Credit by Examination process in the *Faculty Guide to Prior Learning Assessment* (July 2015). The following flow chart demonstrates a sample process for attempting to receive credit by examination from a student's perspective. (Please adapt as needed to reflect your institution's policy and process.)