LER ACCELERATOR COHORT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Call for Proposals: The LER Accelerator invites applications from postsecondary institutions to participate in a one-year cohort-based initiative on planning and developing Learning and Employment Records (LERs).

Application deadline **March 10**.

ABOUT THE LER ACCELERATOR

The LER Accelerator is a coalition aimed at advancing the development and adoption of LERs in postsecondary education. The Accelerator's efforts aim to modernize how learning achievements and job skills are documented and recognized, helping to create a more transparent, efficient, and equitable system for both learners and employers. Members of the LER Accelerator Coalition are working collaboratively to address barriers to LER adoption and advance successful models and examples that accelerate the creation and issuance of quality credentials in post-secondary education. Coalition members include:

1EdTech	ACE	EDUCAUSE
AACRAO	AIR	NACE
AACC	C-BEN	NACADA
AAC&U	Digital Credentials Consortium	UPCEA

Purpose: Selected postsecondary institutions will participate in a <u>one-year</u> cohort experience to <u>plan and prepare</u> to develop a new LER initiative or to <u>further</u> an existing LER initiative.

Eligibility: Institutions considering participating in the project may be at any stage of LER implementation from those just beginning to develop LER concepts to those ready to scale existing LER projects across departments/divisions. Two-year and four-year institutions, public and private, regional and flagship, HBCU, HSI, MSI, Tribal and NASNTI are all encouraged to apply.

Funding and Support: Participating institutions will receive a grant of $10,000-$15,000 to support their planning, guided support from coaches who are experts in the field, and tailored technical assistance (TA). Institutions will move through a planning process together, learning from and alongside each other.
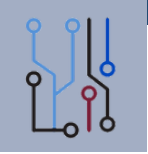
Project Type: Projects should fall into one or more of the following six LER Accelerator innovation streams. Projects should address one or more of the subcategories (items a, b, and/or c) in the selected innovation stream.

LER Accelerator Innovation Streams
1. **State-Level Workforce Integration**
    a. Development of accessible institutional strategies
    b. Creation of privacy preserving assessment tools
    c. Establishment of interoperable collaboration models
   Example: Building a digital wallet, LER, comprehensive learner record (CLR), or such related platform or transcript.

2. **Learner-Centered Credential Innovation**
    a. Implementation of learner-controlled credentials
    b. Leveraging the knowledge of learners to create credentials
    c. Integration of validated achievements
    d. Development of inclusive engagement strategies
  Example: Developing a learner-tailored badging initiative

3. **Systems Alignment and Governance**
    a. Creation of privacy-protecting frameworks
    b. Development of secure validation protocols
    c. Establishment of interoperable standards
  Example: Developing procedures, policies, and systems to support an LER initiative. Developing protocols for data collection, verification, and validation.

4. **Credit/Non-Credit Integration**
    a. Design of boundless credentialing models
    b. Development of quality assurance frameworks
    c. Creation of flexible credential pathways
  Example: Creating a pathway from non-credit credential to degrees.

5. **Skills-Based Curriculum Processes**
    a. Development of transparent competency frameworks
    b. Creation of accessible skills taxonomies
    c. Integration of verified achievement data
  Example: Mapping skills and competencies in courses to document learning.

6. **Vendor Collaboration**
    a. Alignment with open standards
    b. Implementation of secure specifications
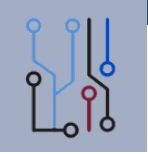   c. Adoption of interoperable protocols
  Example: Integrating existing systems for a digital wallet, LER, comprehensive learner record (CLR) to enable interoperability.

Planning Phase: This one-year planning initiative does not include achieving implementation, during the initiative. Institutions who are ready to begin implementation during the planning phase are free to do so, however TA and coaching support will be designed solely around planning elements.

Participating institutions will receive guided support to incorporate the following elements (as relevant) into their projects:
- Commitment to principle-aligned stakeholder engagement
- Governance structures supporting learner agency
- Technical readiness for interoperable systems
- Privacy and security frameworks
- Executive leadership engagement

Duration: April 2025 - May 2026

Preliminary Timeline of Activities
April - May 2025: Virtual cohort launch
May - July 2025: Institutional pre-assessment
Summer 2025: In-person convening w/ experts and TA providers
Fall 2025: Development of an action plan for your LER initiative
Ongoing: Regular coaching sessions for your institutional team
Ongoing: Peer-to-peer learning opportunities
Spring 2026: Preparing for implementation of action plan
Apr-May 2026: Finalize launch plan and virtual cohort convening

Potential for Implementation Phase and Support: There is an opportunity for cohort participants in the planning phase to be invited to apply for a potential implementation phase. Participants in the implementation phase would receive substantial funding and support to bring the project they designed in the planning phase or related efforts to fruition.

How to Apply
To indicate interest in joining the cohort, an institution should submit a <u>2-4 page</u> application that includes the following:

1. **Project Description:** Describe in detail the type of LER project the institution would like to advance during the planning period. Please include:
   a. Project purpose, goals, and anticipated outcomes.
   b. Which LER innovation stream(s) the project will fall under and which anticipated subcategories from the innovation stream(s) the project will address.
   c. What learner populations will benefit from this project.
   d. What proportion of learners at your institution this project will impact.
   e. What related work has been done to date to lay the groundwork for this project.
   f. How this project aligns with the institution's strategic priorities.
   g. Any additional relevant context.

2. **Value to Joining the Cohort:** Briefly explain how participating in the LER Accelerator cohort will support your institution in achieving your goals.

3. **Project Team:** Identify project team members by name, title, dept/office, and email address. The project should have 1-2 senior/executive sponsors and a project lead who will have primary responsibility for setting and executing the project's goals and deliverables. Include additional team members.

Please address any questions to Julie Johnson, julie@strategyforwardadvisors.com and Michelle Mott, mottm.ctr@aacrao.org.

Due Date
Submit your application Michelle Mott, mottm.ctr@aacrao.org by **March 10th, 10 pm ET**.

Selection Process: Proposals will be assessed on the criteria described above. Semi-finalist applicants may be asked to submit additional information and/or participate in an interview. Proposals will be reviewed by members of the LER Accelerator Coalition. Candidates will be announced by **April 8th, 2025.**