

All Learning Counts - New England

All Learning Counts - New England (ALC-NE) seeks to increase and accelerate adult attainment of quality credentials in New England through new policies and programs related to recognition of learning (ROL), stackable credential pathways, new tools and resources, and convenings of state policymakers, postsecondary education leaders and adult learners.

Background

Adults face significant barriers to postsecondary enrollment and completion including limited time and resources, burdensome postsecondary administrative structures and institutions' failure to recognize adults' life, work and education experiences. Many adults already hold skills that are of value to employers, but do not hold a postsecondary credential, a necessity for careers that offer family-sustaining wages. Validating work experience should be an entry point to a first credential for adults.

Why ALC is important in New England:

~203,000 adults are enrolled in undergraduate-level programs at New England institutions (53,007 at SNHU)

1 in 2 adults in New England recognize the need for additional education to advance their careers

Recognition of the need for additional education is higher among those without a bachelor's or graduate degree and African-American and Hispanic individuals

Activities

Conduct focus groups on adult learners' experience with ROL, enrollment and completion of postsecondary credentials

Hold "Implementers" meetings (i.e., institutional data experts, academic affairs officers, registrars, adult learner staff)

Convene an "All Learning Counts Policy Summit"

Form a regional advisory committee to provide strategic guidance

Perform preliminary assessments of state readiness

Goal: Institutions will decrease structural barriers for enrollment by recognizing learning no matter where or when it happens.

Key steps to assessment and recognition of learning include:

1. Evaluating individuals' skills and competencies and mapping them to curricula and programs that align along a credential pathway
2. Identifying effective frameworks to award and recognize learners' prior learning and experience (i.e. industry-recognized credentials, non-credit programs)
3. Supporting students' success along postsecondary pathways via advising, flexible scheduling and delivery models and targeted financial aid

Expected Outcomes

1. Regional convenings to promote a new mindset among policymakers and institutional leaders on emerging systems of ROL
2. Level-setting education and workshops that accelerate systematic, multi-state implementation of new ROL and stackable credential policies and programs to ensure adults' learning counts toward timely completion of postsecondary credentials
3. New policy research and tools to align state policies and regulations, expand institutional changes, and support adequate funding
4. Provision of resources and expertise to key decision- and policy-makers