**AACC’s Artificial Intelligence Incubator Network**

**Request for Proposals**

The **Artificial Intelligence Incubator Network** Initiative is managed by American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) with funding from Dell Technologies and Intel. This 18-month initiative aims to design and build Artificial Intelligence (AI) Incubators across the country utilizing the expertise and industry-connections of America’s community college system.

AACC believes that AI has become an increasingly important and relevant field of study across multiple occupational areas and industry sectors. AI Incubators (physical or virtual) can be solution centers for the community and a talent pool for the local labor market. Community colleges can learn from their peers through this network at a faster rate than if they tackled this topic alone. All colleges seeking to participate in this work developing and strategizing how to incorporate AI learning content into their courses and learning pathways into their institutions are welcomed.

AACC intends to build this network quickly and elevate a national dialogue and set of coordinated resources to the wider community college system. A minimum of one college per state will be encouraged to join. For colleges that choose to participate, AACC will provide all AI Incubator Network partners with the following:

* AI Incubator Network discussions led by AACC once month in one of three cohorts:
  + Cohort A: Colleges seeking to design and build an AI Incubator as a physical laboratory on the campus
  + Cohort B: Colleges seeking to design and build an AI Incubator in a virtual platform
  + Cohort C: Colleges seeking to design and build a hybridized AI Incubator in both virtual and on-campus scenarios
* State-specific (or regional where appropriate) opportunities to connect with AACC on strategic economic development related to AI Incubators
* Strategies on student engagement into AI programming, and shared lessons about student projects between and among the participating colleges
* Best practices from the field of AI Incubation as identified by AACC, Intel, Dell, and other industry-relevant partners including but not limited to:
  + AI learning content, course exercises, instructional videos, data sets, authentic learning experiences, pre-packaged modules for courses, etc.
  + Pathways to credit and non-credit bearing courses, certificates, associate degree programs, bachelor’s degree programs, course sequencing, etc.
  + Train-the-trainer faculty programs to prepare faculty to teach the AI content

Ideally, all applicants will be selected to be included in the Community of Practice, but only ten will be selected for direct funding of $40,000 to build out their AI Incubator Labs (on campus, in a virtual platform, or in both formats as a hybrid approach). Working in partnership with Dell and Intel, AACC will document replicable practices for scaling to the wider network of AACC’s membership and other interested parties as appropriate.

**Important Dates:**

* Opportunity Announcement: Thursday, January 27, 2022, 8:15 am
* Deadline to Submit RFP: Friday, February 25, 2022
* AI Incubator Network Selections and Announcements Made: Tuesday, March 25, 2022
* Train the Trainer Virtual Sessions: April 12-26, 2022, or May 3-17, 2022 (license agreements must be signed prior to attendance)
* Periods of Performance:
  + AI Incubator Network Community of Practice April 1, 2022-September 30, 2023
  + AI Incubator Network ­­$40,000 Lab Subgrant Recipients: April 1, 2022-March 31, 2023

**AACC’s AI Incubator Network Participation Request Instructions**

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| **Institutions Seeking to Participate** | Participants must be current AACC member community colleges. To confirm your AACC membership, please check the Community College Finder at: [www.aacc.nche.edu/college-finder/](http://www.aacc.nche.edu/college-finder/). |
| **Submission Categories:**  **Cohorts A, B, and C** | Applicants that are seeking to be included in the AI Incubator Network will receive access to:   * AI Incubator Network discussions led by AACC once monthly in one of three cohorts:   + Cohort A: Colleges seeking to design and build an AI Incubator as a physical laboratory on the campus   + Cohort B: Colleges seeking to design and build an AI Incubator in a virtual platform   + Cohort C: Colleges seeking to design and build a hybridized AI Incubator in both virtual and on-campus scenarios * State-specific (or regional where appropriate) opportunities to connect with AACC on strategic economic development related to AI Incubators * Strategies on student engagement into AI programming, and shared lessons about student projects between and among the participating colleges * Best practices from the field of AI Incubation as identified by AACC, Intel, Dell, and other industry-relevant partners including but not limited to four pre-existing courses with additional content to support rapid adoption of AI activities at an institution, and pathways to associate degree programs, as well as train-the-trainer faculty programs |
| **Application Process** | A minimum of three reviewers will assess each section in the 100 point-valued system outlined below to review applications to join the Community of Practice. Ideally, all applicants will be selected to be included in the Community of Practice.  From the application pool, ten colleges will be selected for direct funding of $40,000 to build out their AI Incubator efforts. These funded colleges will be selected based on scores in the outlined categories, geographic and demographic diversity, and in conjunction with the funder’s approval. All colleges will receive notification (selected and non-selected) by March 25, 2022. All colleges who receive funding will have additional expectations. The 10 selected sites will receive $40,000 to:   * Have one workforce and economic development leader and one Artificial Intelligence primary point of contact consistently participating in individualized strategic economic development discussions on AI skills and the full Community of Practice group discussions * Send 3 participants to the *AI for Workforce Train the Trainer* virtual sessions in either April or May. Institutions who have already completed this training will not need to repeat it. * Elevate, embed, and prioritize AI skills into more occupational areas within community college talent preparation efforts, both internally within the college, as well as externally with associated industry and workforce partners; * Directly impact a minimum of 10 students during the year of work through a project of the institution’s choosing; * Narrative and fiscal reporting every 6 months * Showcase promising practices together with AACC as they are identified with others in the community of practice as well as nationally.   To be considered for both the Community of Practice, and the potential $40,000 in funding, please complete the following:   * Section 1. President or CEO Support Letter (5 Points) * Section 2. Target Population and Impact Metrics (15 Points) * Section 3. Industry Engagement Strategy (25 Points) * Section 4. Statement of Internal Capacity (20 Points) * Section 5. Detailed Strategy and Sustainability (30 Points) * Section 6. Project Budget and Narrative (5 Points *only to be completed by those institutions applying for funding*) |
| **Review Process** | As detailed above, each submission will be evaluated using the criteria described in this RFP by a minimum of three individuals and invitations and awards will be decided based on application scores and other considerations such as geography, target population, and input by the funder.  Institutions invited to join the Community of Practice and institutions receiving incubator funding will be notified on Tuesday, March 25, 2022. |

**Section 1. President or CEO Cover Letter (5 points)**

Applicant must provide a cover letter stating the president or CEO’s support for the college’s participation in the community of practice with a statement of the leader’s commitment to engage with this national initiative. **Please note that the college president or CEO will be the individual informed if the application is selected.**

Within the letter, please also note the following:

* A commitment to be engaged with this initiative together with AACC, Intel and Dell.
* A commitment to share promising and best practices with the community of practice for replication at other colleges.
* Assurance that the college agrees to accept AACC’s and funder’s media and publicity policies and abide by the media embargo and may not publish, post, broadcast or distribute embargoed news releases or details of the award prior to the end of the embargo.
* A commitment to have at least one college representative participate in AACC’s Workforce Development Institute to showcase promising practices and program successes for the wider AACC membership.
* Should my institution be selected for involvement in the Community of Practice, and potentially the $40,000, I understand that I will need to sign a formal contract with AACC and will need to review and approve Intel and Dell’s license agreement for content, trademark language, etc. as part of that agreement.

**Section 2. Target Population and Impact metrics (15 points)**

Applicant should respond to the following. It is understood that for institutions with limited to no AI background, several of these answers will be objectives. Please note where your institution can use assistance to achieve these targets.

* Summarize the geographic region to be served, the current labor market, and sector specific needs which you believe an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Incubator might serve in your community.
* If you are aware of any, please briefly note any existing AI activities or plans within the state, regional or local economic development plans.
* Please state the general population within your institution (average size annually, credit and non-credit students, and general demographic breakdowns).
* Please describe the cohort of students you are seeking to serve as part of this work.
* How many students are currently engaged in any AI activities on at your institution?
* How many students might create AI projects within the first year?
* How many faculty do you anticipate impacting through this work?
* How many courses do you intend to modify and/or create by the end of the first year?
* How many presentations in your community will you do during the first year?

**Section 3. Industry Engagement Strategy (25 points)**

* Please provide a general overview of the industry partners with whom you work and how you typically engage with them.
* Specific to an AI discussion, please name companies that you think would want to have discussions and/or work with your institution related to an AI skills pipeline that you aim to create, for internship, apprenticeship, and/or employment opportunities.
* If any, please least other opportunities your college sees for partners (industry associations, coalitions, and other potential partners) who would want to be part of this work and build out your AI network.

**Section 4. Statement of Internal Capacity (20 points)**

* Please provide a brief bio of the one key program staff who will manage the content work for your organization with an instructional background in STEM, and potentially AI. Describe their comfort in train-the-trainer models.
* Please provide a brief bio of one key program staff who will manage the economic development work for your organization. This might be a Vice President, Dean, or Director of Workforce, Director of Economic Development (or similarly titled individual).

**Section 5. Detailed Strategy and Sustainability Plan (30 Points)**

* Describe your intentions to create one of the following:
  + We are a college seeking to design and build an AI Incubator as a physical laboratory on the campus
  + We are a college seeking to design and build an AI Incubator in a virtual platform
  + We are a college seeking to design and build a hybridized AI Incubator in both virtual and on-campus scenarios
* Describe how you believe an AI Incubator will skill people for the digital economy, focusing on groups that have historically been underrepresented in technology pathways;
* Define how you will impact a minimum of ten students in a direct fashion through an individual or group AI project
* Outline your intentions to continue to embed this work post-grant. Describe integration plans for the framework with the campus organization and behaviors at the systems level.

**Section 6. Project Budget and Narrative (5 Points)**

Applicants who are selected to be a part of the AI Incubator Community of Practice will not receive direct funds and do not need to submit a budget.

A subset of ten applicants will be eligible to receive $40,000 to build out their AI Incubators. For applicants seeking to be considered for this funding, please provide a budget and budget narrative for $40,000 for 18 months of work starting April 1, 2022-March 31, 2023 using the sample budget chart below. Provide a budget narrative below. Applicants are welcome to offset using other institutional dollars to cover the costs of this work, but all applicants seeking funds should plan on:

* Maintaining a presence on monthly individual calls and group TA discussions for the two representatives.
* Providing details on what physical, or virtual, buildouts they intend to do to create the AI Laboratories for the institution.
* Narrative and fiscal reporting every 6 months
* Travel to AACC’s 2023 Workforce Development Institute for one person to attend a three-night, four-day, event.
* Verification from the college’s IT department of the technical capacity of the existing labs (physical or virtual), or lab in which the AI work might be housed going forward. In the event no such lab exists, the college should budget for this build out.

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| **American Association of Community Colleges** | | |
| **AI Incubator Proposal Budget** | | |
| **SUGGESTED BUDGET CATEGORIES** | | **TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET** |
| **1** | **Direct Project Costs** |  |
|  |  |  |
|  | **Personnel (if requested)** |  |
|  | **Materials and Supplies for Lab** |  |
|  | **Equipment for Lab** |  |
|  | **Travel** |  |
|  | *SUBTOTAL: Other Direct Expenses* |  |
|  |  |  |
| **2** | **Indirect Costs (if requested)** |  |
|  | **Indirect Expenses** |  |
|  | *SUBTOTAL: Indirect Expenses* |  |
|  |  |  |
| **3** | **GRAND TOTAL** | $40,000.00 |