

## The Kentucky Counselor Academy Model

The academy, a free comprehensive series of professional learning and resources for school counselors and FRYSC coordinators, will provide flexible opportunities to connect and learn with higher education and counselor leaders. Designed to enhance professional learning and build the capacity of school counselors and FRYSC coordinators statewide, the academy will consist of insightful discussions, updates and advising strategies relevant to the ever-changing college admissions landscape that will aid students, families and professionals.

The structure of the academy will include a variety of options giving school counselors and FRYSC coordinators the freedom to take part in learning that aligns with their specific professional needs and availability:

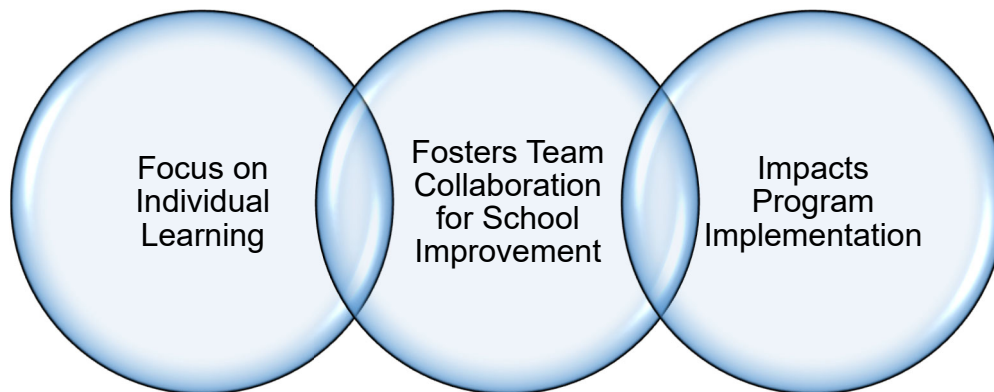
- Face-to-face professional learning meetings every two months as part of a geographical cohort/series
- Monthly virtual cohort professional learning meetings/series
- Face-to-face mentoring and support in schools, FRYSCs and institutions of higher education
- Development and promotion of a school counselor's college and career counseling toolkit
- Development and promotion of online guidance and sample counseling plans

### Professional Learning: Face-to-Face and Virtual Meetings

*In pursuit of the Council on Postsecondary Education's (CPE) goal to increase the percentage of adults with a postsecondary credential to 60% by 2030, the CPE in partnership with the Kentucky Campus Compact (KyCC) propose a coherent and comprehensive professional learning system that advances college and career counseling effectiveness and student success.*

### **Why is professional learning essential for college and career counseling?**

As a collective unit, the *Kentucky Professional Learning Standards* define the conditions, attributes and elements for effective professional learning, with the primary focus on educator learning that leads to successful student learning. Professional learning serves simultaneously three purposes:



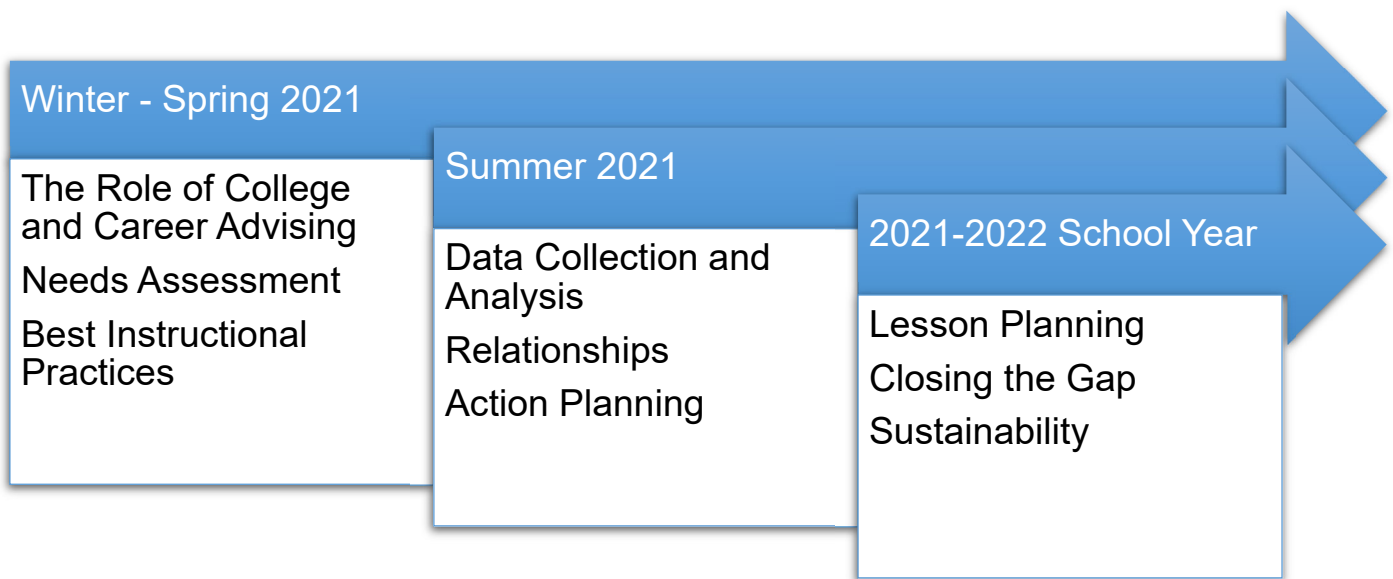
### **Who shares responsibility for designing and implementing professional learning?**

The work of defining responsibility begins with establishing learning outcomes that set high expectations and provide the support necessary to achieve them. So, school and district leaders, educational cooperatives, third-party providers, institutions of higher education, professional associations and state education agencies all have a role. Examples of specific organizations, those who currently have involvement with college and career counseling, who will constitute the design team and participate in the design of the professional learning series include the following:

- Council on Postsecondary Education
- Kentucky Campus Compact
- Kentucky Higher Education Authority
- GEAR UP Kentucky
- Kentucky Institutions of Higher Education
- Kentucky Department of Education
- Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet
- Kentucky School Counselor Advisory Council
- Kentucky School Counselors Association
- Kentucky Counseling Association
- Kentucky Area Technology Centers
- Kentucky Association for Career and Technical Education

**How will professional learning complement the current work of school counselors, FRYSC coordinators and college advisors?**

Cohorts, collaboration and partnerships will provide school counselors, FRYSC coordinators and college advisors with professional learning communities that support changed professional practices around comprehensive college and career counseling in their own schools, districts or institutions. As a state counselor academy, Kentucky will support professional learning communities and cohorts through a short term goal of covering identified by the design team while remaining committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility and goal alignment. A possible professional learning series may include the following themes:



**What is the difference between professional learning that is rooted in capacity building vs ‘train the trainer’?**

The Kentucky Counselor Academy concept/design is based on the most current research-based data that we have on effective professional learning (that is, professional development that actually leads to improved practice). The focus of the academy will be capacity building, not a ‘train the trainer’ model.

Capacity building provides people access to the most current information and the opportunity to try out the most effective strategies, resources and tools available. As they assess their own organization's needs, they are able to use the most relevant information, resources, strategies and tools, to create a customized plan for professional growth and learning. A good plan takes into account where their organization currently is and where they want to go—in a specified amount of time.

Capacity building enables people to respond to adaptive challenges—those challenges that do not lend themselves to a prescribed 'fix.' Technical 'fixes'—generally a defined set of 'steps' or processes—are efficient and effective for technical problems. For many of the issues in schools and districts related to effective college and career counseling, however, technical approaches simply don't work. People are different, situations are different, and therefore leaders must be adaptive to these subtle (and sometimes not so subtle) nuances of the people and situations they are dealing with—and proceed accordingly.

Train the trainer means people will attend training and be given information and materials so that they may conduct the same training in their school or district for their professional learning program. In essence a "clone" is created who can replicate a program, but may be unable to adapt should any change to that program be necessary.

Capacity Building is much more than training and includes the following:

- 'People' development- increasing the understanding, skills, access to information, knowledge and effectiveness of participants
- Organizational development- building structures, processes and procedures within organizations, and also the management of relationships between the different organizations (schools, districts, higher education, the KHEAA, the KDE, etc.)

Participants in capacity building PLCs (such as this academy) shouldn't expect to be given monthly installments of a preplanned and segmented training regimen that they simply replicate. Rather, they should expect to learn and then to collaborate with their cohort and participants from other districts to:

- Distill, synthesize and internalize what they have learned;
- Contextualize it within the unique circumstances of their own schools; and

- Work collaboratively to create deliverables related to *The Kentucky Framework of Best Practices for School Counselors*.

## Development and promotion of resources

Throughout the proposed grant timeline, the design team with the assistance of AmeriCorps members will development and promote a school counselor’s college and career counseling toolkit, guidance and sample counseling plans. Kentucky’s school counselors, FRYSC coordinators and college advisors find themselves wearing many hats and sometimes it is challenging keep track of what needs to get done or how to stay up to date with the latest counseling practices. While there are a myriad of resources available to aid in daily tasks, finding the right resources can often take time away from the primary mission of serving students.

The development of an online toolkit, and other resources as identified by the design team, is essential to invest in long term educational equity for the Commonwealth by providing students and families with resources and information to guide them through college and career planning, and prepare for and pay for college. The online toolkit is even more important in a time of a pandemic when face-to-face guidance is limited or difficult to find. The toolkit will be designed to be a curation of resources and guidance related to college and career advising and may include topics such as:

- Participation in early postsecondary opportunities: Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), dual credit, work-based learning, apprenticeships and career pathways.
- College and career exploration: Determining long-term career interests and the type of education or training beyond high school necessary to meet that aspiration.
- College application: Completing application requirements, including college entrance assessments, essays and letters of recommendation.
- Financial literacy: Helping students understand the cost of postsecondary education and training and complete the FAFSA to access loans and grants.
- College match and fit: Determining which institutions to apply to and enroll in based on their academic success in serving different populations of students and how they align with a student’s personality, interest and financial situation.

- Summer melt: Ensuring that students who indicated their intent to enroll in postsecondary education proceed to matriculation in a timely fashion.
- Peer networking: Developing a sense of community with other students at an institution to increase engagement and likelihood of persistence.
- Persistence engagement: Supporting students as they navigate their first year of postsecondary education or training to ensure they have an individual to lean on if they face hardship, isolation and academic struggle.

## Kentucky Counselor Academy Timeline

The effective design of professional learning will enable school counselors, FRYSC coordinators and college advisors to move past comprehension and implementation to improve core practices for the benefit of all Kentucky students. In planning the design of the experiences in relation to the objectives below, intentional focus must be placed on the audience, environment, availability of resources and opportunities for all educators to access the same professional learning materials.

Timeline	Objectives and Messaging	Audience
<p><b>Preparation for Implementation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Identify and convene team and other educational partners</li> <li>➤ Evaluate current resources and tools</li> <li>➤ Develop training resources for professional learning series</li> <li>➤ Develop digital platform for professional learning resources</li> <li>➤ Recruit face-to-face and virtual professional learning participants</li> <li>➤ Recruit and train AmeriCorps members</li> </ul> <p>Messaging</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Focus on the need for comprehensive college and career counseling</li> <li>➤ Share the development and status of the KCA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Internal</li> </ul>

<p><b>January 2022</b></p>	<p>Internal Professional Learning and Kick-Off</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Explore the role of state and national resources</li> <li>➤ Identify effective teaching practices</li> </ul> <p>Digital Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Develop supporting materials for the professional learning series</li> <li>➤ Develop resources to explore college and career advising</li> <li>➤ Develop examples of effective practices</li> </ul> <p>Messaging</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Highlight overviews of best practices</li> <li>➤ Advise of upcoming professional learning opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Leadership Team</li> <li>➤ AmeriCorps Members</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Spring – Summer 2022</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Identify effective practices</li> <li>➤ Identify foundations of a college and career counseling program</li> <li>➤ Conduct a local needs assessment</li> <li>➤ Data collection and analysis</li> </ul> <p>Virtual Series</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Establish college and career counseling cohort (AmeriCorps member-led with support)</li> </ul> <p>Digital Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Develop supporting materials for professional learning series</li> <li>➤ Develop online guidance and resources</li> </ul> <p>Messaging</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Continue to advise of upcoming professional learning opportunities</li> <li>➤ Focus on effective practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Regional cooperatives</li> <li>➤ Virtual cadres-open to all districts and institutions of higher education</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Fall - Winter 2022</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Apply effective practices</li> <li>➤ Explore and build relationships</li> <li>➤ Plan strategies of action</li> </ul> <p>Virtual Series</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Continue college and career counseling cohort (AmeriCorps member-led with support)</li> </ul> <p>Digital Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Develop supporting materials for professional learning series</li> <li>➤ Develop online guidance and resources</li> <li>➤ Develop comprehensive college and career advising toolkit</li> </ul> <p>Messaging</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Continue to advise of upcoming professional learning opportunities</li> <li>➤ Focus on effective practices and illustrative examples</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Regional Cooperatives</li> <li>➤ Virtual cadres-open to all districts and institutions of higher education</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Spring – Summer 2023</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Refine and select additional effective practices to develop lessons</li> <li>➤ Determine evaluation protocol for closing-the-gap action plan</li> <li>➤ Develop additional strategies to sustain counseling efforts</li> </ul> <p>Virtual Series</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Continue college and career counseling cohort (AmeriCorps member-led with support)</li> </ul> <p>Messaging</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Continue to advise of upcoming professional learning opportunities</li> <li>➤ Focus on effective practices and illustrative examples</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Regional Cooperatives</li> <li>➤ Virtual cadres-open to all districts and institutions of higher education</li> </ul>
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*\*Notes: Virtual Series to occur at least once per month. Virtual Series also may supplement any other F2F supports. All digital resources will be archived on the professional learning digital platform.*