



Towards a Culture of Grants at Two-Year Colleges

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Compared to project grants, ATE Centers have a much broader scope. These Centers provide national leadership in educating the skilled technical workforce. They connect educational institutions, industry, and professional and trade associations; strengthen connections among existing and emerging ATE projects; provide faculty professional development; and support broad outreach and community building. Their expanded scope is reflected in higher funding levels and longer award durations. ATE Centers address a wide range of advanced technology fields, including engineering, micro- and nanotechnologies, advanced manufacturing, environmental, security, energy, information systems, biotechnology, and emerging fields.

ATE Consortia are synergistic collaborations between several two-year colleges and industry, where the partners combine expertise in one or more advanced technology areas to better respond to industry needs and promote regional economic development. Consortia must also work together with Centers and projects focused on the same technology area(s) to leverage and build upon existing resources and networks.

EvaluATE is a special ATE project acting as the evaluation hub for NSF's ATE program. It is based at The Evaluation Center at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, MI. EvaluATE provides support to evaluators, Principal Investigators, project teams, college administrators, and grant specialists involved with ATE grants. In addition to offering webinars and resources to strengthen evaluation capacity within the ATE community, EvaluATE also conducts an annual survey to collect data from ATE projects and centers to inform project improvement and program planning.

Another ATE special project, ATE Central is dedicated to supporting and highlighting the work of projects and centers. ATE Central acts as an information hub for the ATE community. It helps direct users to a full range of high-impact resources available online, including curricula, learning objects, podcasts, videos, and more. The portal also aggregates information about the materials developed by ATE centers and projects, and organizes them by subject, context appropriate keywords, and other digital cataloging techniques.

MentorLinks is a program offered by the American Association of Community Colleges with support from an NSF Advanced Technological Education (ATE) grant. The program helps colleges develop or strengthen STEM technician education programs, explore new ideas and partnerships through networking opportunities, and gain guidance on building and sustaining successful programs. Throughout the program, participating colleges work closely with an experienced mentor through virtual meetings, complemented by an on-site mentor visit and a reverse site visit that allows mentees to observe and learn from established programs.