

Columbus State Selected for Project ACCESS

Columbus State Community College is scaling its work-based learning programs as part of a nationally recognized effort to better connect students to quality jobs. Through its selection for JFF's Project ACCESS, Columbus State is expanding paid apprenticeships, internships, and short-term credential programs while strengthening employer partnerships and support services.

The Challenge

Across Central Ohio—as in many regions nationwide—there is a growing gap between talent supply and demand in high-wage, high-demand industries such as manufacturing and IT. Too often, students face barriers accessing paid work-based learning opportunities that connect them to quality jobs and career advancement. This challenge is not unique to Central Ohio; it reflects a national need to scale proven earn-and-learn models that better align education, employment, and equitable economic opportunity. Through Project ACCESS, Jobs for the Future (JFF) and the PwC Foundation are addressing this challenge by supporting 10 colleges across the country, including Columbus State Community College, to expand and systematize work-based learning pathways that help more students enter and succeed in today's workforce.

Collaboration Partners

COLUMBUS STATE
COMMUNITY COLLEGE



The Solution

In January 2025, Columbus State Community College was one of only 10 institutions nationwide selected for Jobs for the Future (JFF) and the PwC Foundation's Project ACCESS—Accelerating Career Connections and Employment Success Strategies. Through this two-year, \$300,000 grant, Columbus State is working alongside JFF, PwC, and a national peer cohort to expand paid work-based learning opportunities such as registered apprenticeships, internships, and short-term credential programs. The college's focus is on scaling proven earn-and-learn models and enhancing support services to help more students connect to quality jobs.



The Outcome

Columbus State aims to establish a more efficient system where students can access paid opportunities as a standard part of their education by integrating apprenticeships, internships, and short-term credential programs into academic pathways, expanding employer partnerships, and improving student support services. This approach is designed to strengthen Central Ohio's overall talent pipeline and workforce readiness for high-demand industries like advanced manufacturing.