
Tech Talent Accelerator 3.0 Community of Practice

March 18, 2026
Zoom





The Tech Talent Accelerator is made possible due to support from the Connecticut Office of Workforce Strategy.

Agenda

- ▶ **Welcome and Icebreaker**
 - ▶ *Facilitated by Candace Williams, Senior Director of the Solutions Lab, Business-Higher Education Forum*
- ▶ **Opening Poll**
 - ▶ *Facilitated by Candace Williams, Senior Director of the Solutions Lab, Business-Higher Education Forum*
- ▶ **AI Program Spotlights: Lessons from National Leaders**
 - ▶ *Facilitated by Madison Myers, Manager of Workforce Partnerships, Business-Higher Education Forum*
- ▶ **Breakout Groups: Q&A**
- ▶ **Group Share Out and Discussion**
 - ▶ *Facilitated by Sierra Blackwell, Grants and Operations Associate, Business-Higher Education Forum*
- ▶ **Updates and Housekeeping**
 - ▶ *Robert Merth, Associate Director of Policy and Research, New England Board of Higher Education*

Welcome and Icebreaker

If you could design a new college course today, combining your personal and professional interests, what would you call it?

Opening Poll

AI Program Spotlights: Lessons from National Leaders



*Antonio Delgado
Fornaguera*

- VP of Innovation and Technology Partnerships, Miami-Dade College
- Founder, National



*Pei-yu (Sharon)
Chen*

- Chair and Professor, W.P. Carey School of Business, Arizona State University



Paul Anderson

Professor, California Polytechnic State University, San Louis Obispo

Breakout Groups: Q&A

Breakout Groups: Timing and Directions

In this session, you will join breakout groups organized around specific design elements to ask questions and discuss challenges. The breakout groups are listed below:

1. Breakout Group 1: Teaching Methods, Modality, and Delivery + Healthcare Industry
2. Breakout Group 2: Employer Alignment + Manufacturing Industry
3. Breakout Group 3: Scaling and Measuring Impact + Business Industry

Choose one of three breakout rooms to join for the first twenty minutes. After the twenty minutes have passed, join another breakout room for another twenty minutes. After the second twenty-minute round, we will return to the main room for a round-robin share-out!

Bring your thoughts and questions to your chosen sections!

Round-Robin Share Out

What is one takeaway or compelling insight you have from the spotlight or breakout discussions?

Updates & Housekeeping

Upcoming Key Dates

- Next COP: June 3, 2:30 – 5:00 PM, In-person location TBD
- April Grantee Check-ins
- Grantee Check-in Survey due April 3

SharePoint Sites

- Access confirmation
- Questions?

Innovation Grant RFP: Focus Differentiation

Pilot Grant: Retrofitting existing programs for AI relevance

- Supports the revision, enhancement, or modernization of existing courses, programs, and credentials to integrate AI-related knowledge and skills
- Designed to help institutions update current offerings to remain relevant in an AI-enabled economy

Innovation Grant: Building new bridges into AI-powered careers

- Supports the creation of new learning pathways aligned with high-demand AI-enabled occupations
- Encourages innovation in delivery models, including work-based learning, short-term credentials, or accelerated pathways

Innovation Grant RFP: Timeline & Award Amounts

RFP Released: April 13

Informational webinars: TBD, weeks of April 13 and 20

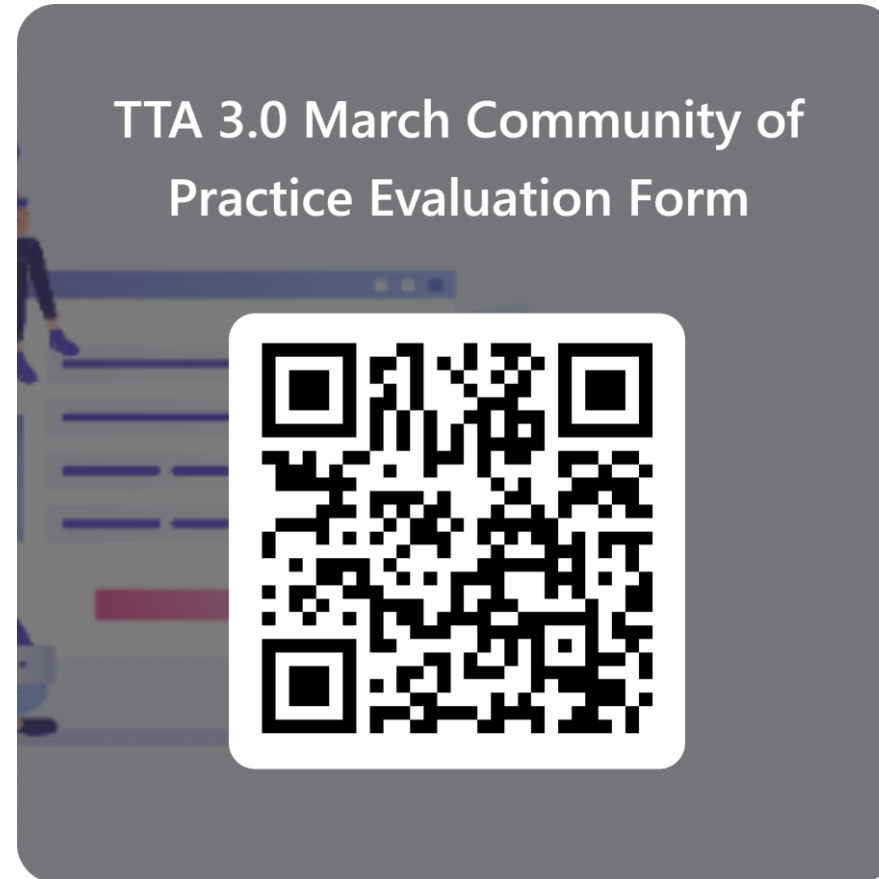
Applications due: June 12

Number of awards: Up to 24
Award amounts: Up to \$75,000

Award notification: August 7

Grant period: September 1, 2026-August 31, 2027

Evaluation Form





Thank you!

Contact us:
techtalentaccelerator@bhef.com

Candace Williams
Senior Director, Solutions Lab
Business-Higher Education Forum
candace.williams@bhef.com

Madison Myers
Manager, Workforce Partnerships
Business-Higher Education Forum
madison.myers@bhef.com

Robert Merth
Associate Director of Policy & Research
New England Board of Higher Education
rmerth@nebhe.org

Sierra Blackwell
Grants and Operations Associate
Business-Higher Education Forum
sierra.blackwell@bhef.com

“The Business-Higher Education Forum’s mission is the challenge of our time. We must close the gap—the economic gap, the skills gap, and the opportunity gap—but we can only do it together.

We sit at the crossroads of the challenge.”

