



Statewide Adult Learner Marketing Campaign

What it is – What's in it for you

Key Topics

- Introductions: MACAE & Full Capacity Marketing (FCM)
- Project Background & Goals
- Approach Replication: Illinois Statewide Adult Ed Campaign
- Your Benefits as a Proud Campaign Partner
- Next Steps: Your Voice Counts!



Project Background

The statewide marketing campaign will help reframe perceptions of postsecondary education by communicating its value, affordability, flexibility, and connection to career advancement while addressing common barriers that prevent adults from enrolling.

The purpose is to help **more adult learners transition from adult education programs into postsecondary education and training opportunities, including degrees, certificates, industry-recognized credentials, and apprenticeships.**

Funded by:



Overall Approach

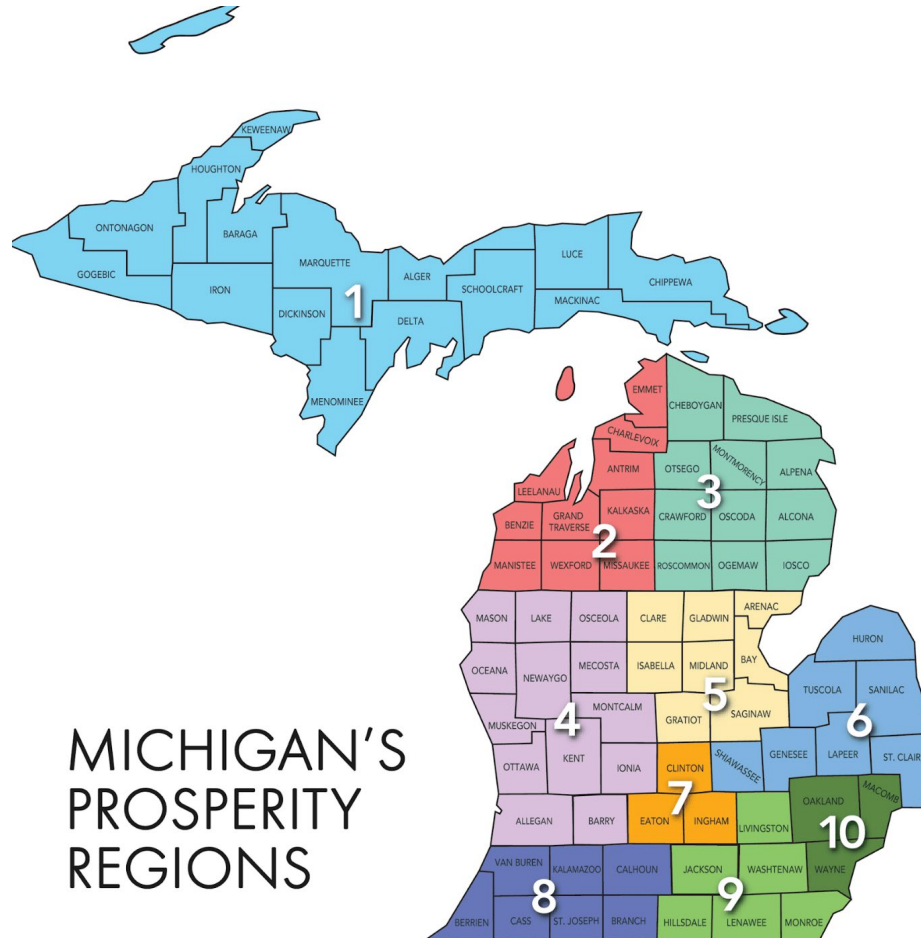
Project Partner:

Michigan Works! Association
representing WIOA Title 1 partners



Crosswalk WIOA Title 1 and Title 2 organizations by region and create a highly segmented campaign approach, developed in coordination with regional partners, to increase meaningful touchpoints with underrepresented and underserved populations seeking stronger economic outcomes for themselves and their families.

- Develop campaign theme
- Communications toolkit
- Pilot project – 2 regions selected
- Select scholarship applicants
- Full digital campaign launch
- Generation of leads for MACAE members
- Monitor, track & final report
- 18-month project



Approach Replication

Illinois Community College Board Statewide Adult Education Campaign

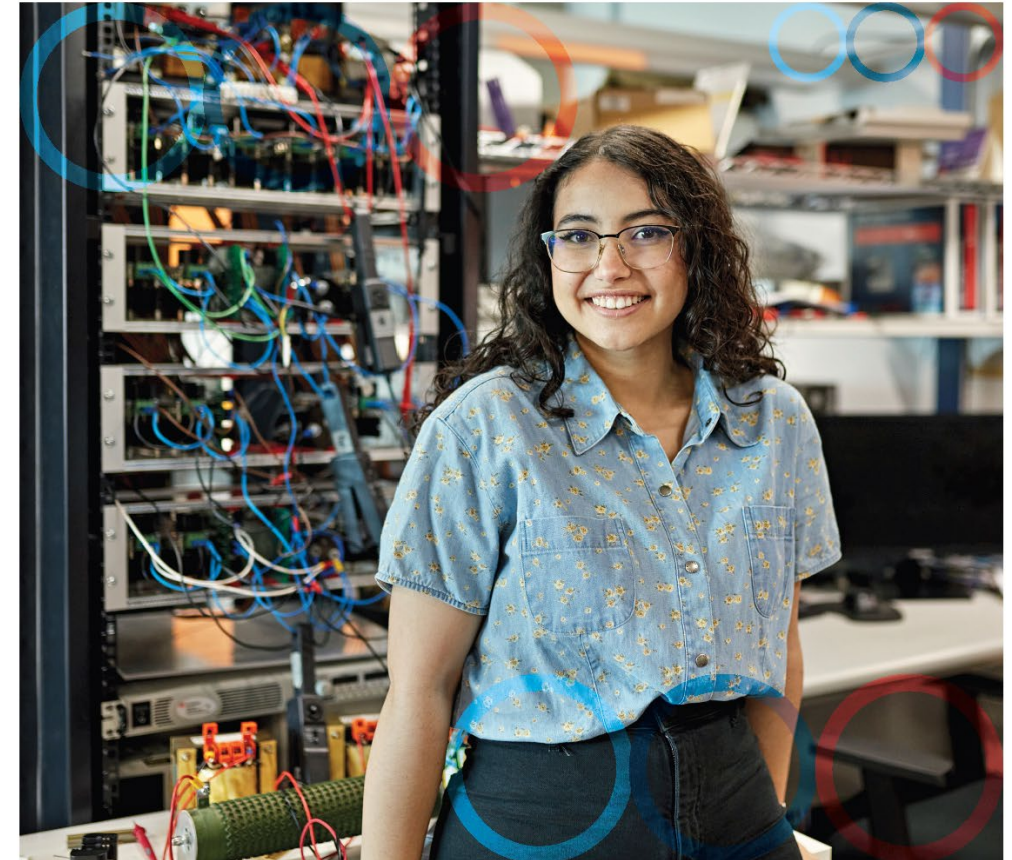


Background & Results

Like many states, Illinois saw significant declines in adult education and noncredit enrollment following the pandemic. The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) engaged FCM for an **18-month initiative** focused on three objectives:

1. Develop a **statewide campaign framework** that could be tailored for local outreach while building awareness of adult education's role in helping learners rebuild their lives after the pandemic.
2. **Increase statewide enrollment** by helping local practitioners strengthen the touchpoints needed to recruit and enroll students.
3. Coordinate Illinois' adult education outreach networks into a **sustainable system** for addressing enrollment declines through ongoing campaigns.

The initiative contributed to a **40.5% increase in total enrollment** in fiscal year 2022 compared with fiscal year 2021.

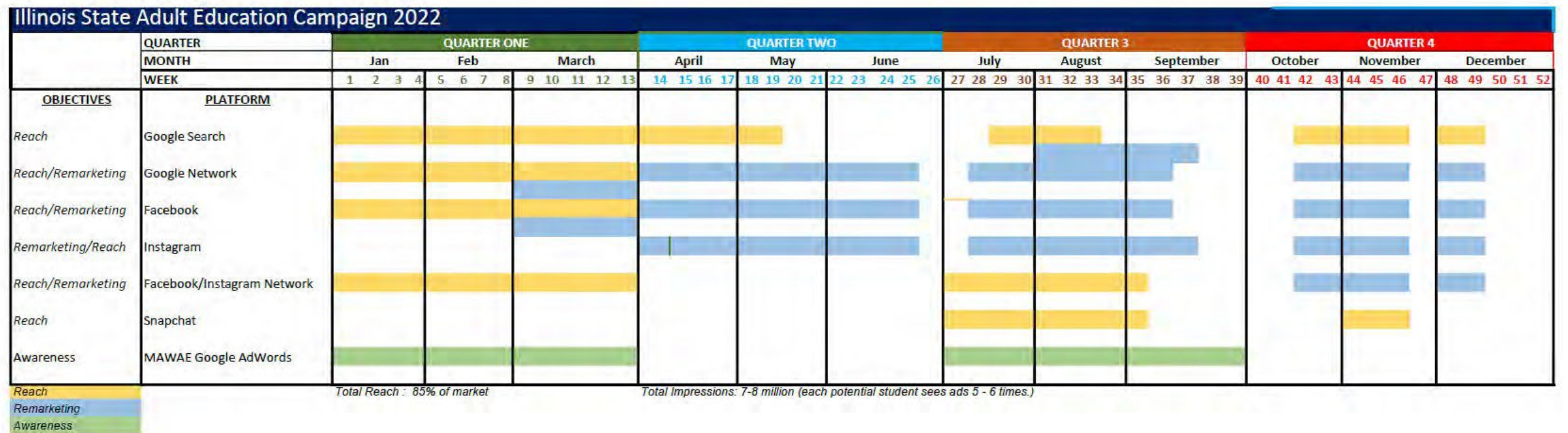


Building Sustainable Statewide Outreach Systems to Recruit Adult Learners
A Case Study in Post-Pandemic Strategies for Adult Education

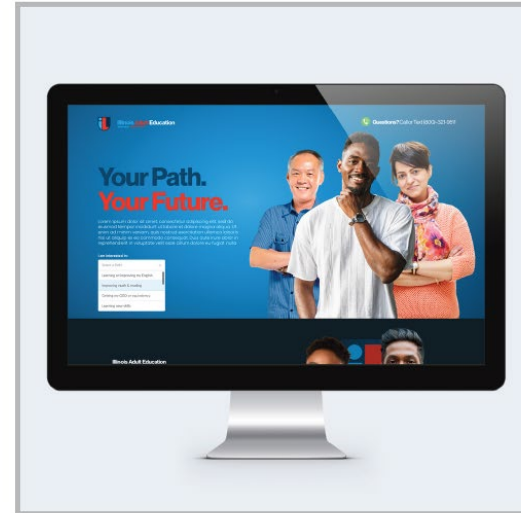
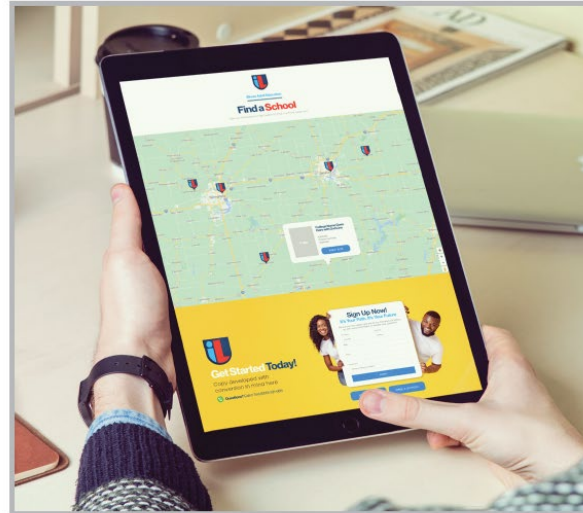
Whitney Thompson, Deputy Director for Workforce Education, Illinois Community College System
Kathy Olsen-Tracey, Senior Director of Adult Education and Family Literacy Agency, Illinois Community College Board

Cellina Shands, CEO/Founder, Full Capacity Marketing, Inc.

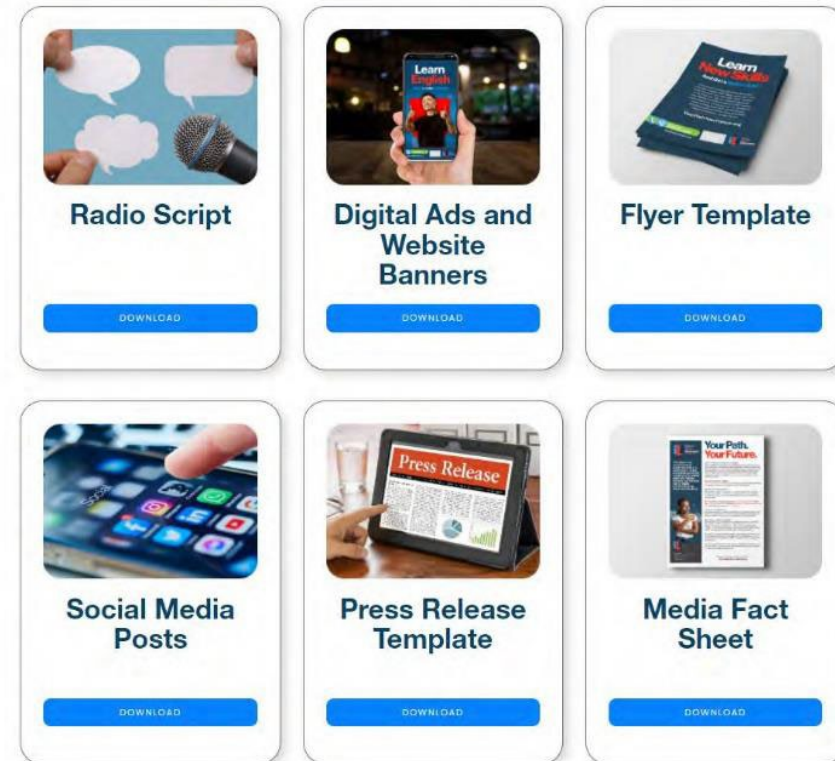
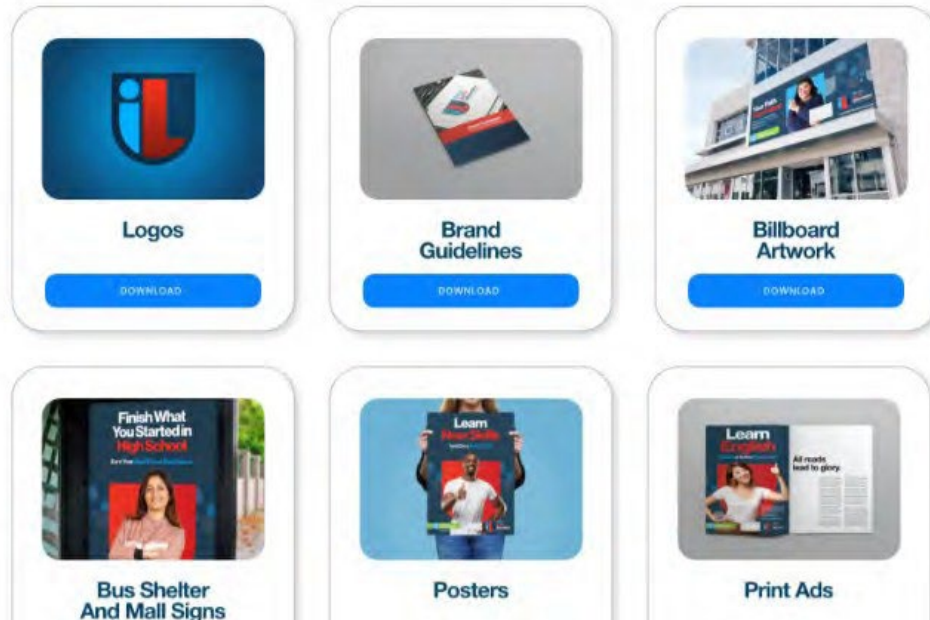
Statewide Media Plan



Logo Identity, Landing Page & Locator Map



Campaign Toolkit



View at:

<https://excellenceinadulthood.org/resources/adult-education-and-literacy-ael-outreach-campaign>

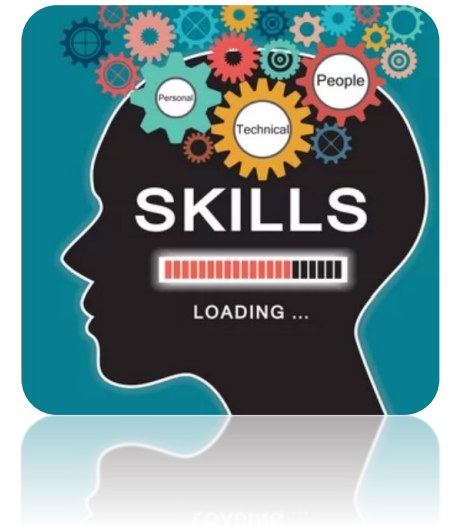
How You Benefit

Awareness & Enrollment – Greater reach across the state via the ads will generate increased awareness of adult education & prospective students who want more information about their local programs.

Marketing Toolkit & Professional Development: Editable toolkit to address your greatest marketing/outreach needs. Live webinars will be recorded and placed on MACAE's website, along with the toolkit (members and non-members). **Preliminary topics that we believe would be high value include the following:**

- Explanation of the campaign components & how it benefits partners
- Developing systems to increase enrollment
- Mastering Social SEO
- Leveraging the Local Media
- Grassroots efforts using the toolkit

Marketing Certification Course - Ten Scholarships (Valued at \$1,295 each)
Elevate your team members' marketing skills (***current MACAE members only**)



In-Kind Scholarships Offered to MACAE Members*

The Brand Amplifier for Workforce & Education Build, elevate and amplify your brand

Are you a public sector organization or nonprofit that focuses on education and/or workforce development missions? Our courses and packages are designed to help build the capacity of your organization to elevate your brand and maximize engagement with students, job seekers, employers, and funders.



Building Your Brand

Module 1 Understanding Your Market & Current Brand Perceptions
Who are the customers likely to enroll in your workforce or education programs? What do they currently think about your brand? What are the motivators and barriers to getting them engaged with you? Prior to crafting and telling your brand story, you must have an extensive understanding of your market and what your community thinks about you. This series gives you a brand blueprint to help you understand your unique selling proposition to build a high in-demand brand. Learn how to position your mission and create highly effective messages to communicate your unique value in the market.

Module 2 Building Ideal Customer Profiles
Workforce and education organizations serve widely diverse audiences many of which include underserved and underrepresented populations. They also want to engage different industries and employers to hire and provide work-based learning opportunities to their jobseekers, students, and youth. Your ideal customer is someone who gets their exact needs met by what you're offering. Narrowing the market allows you to save valuable resources to get to the likely market segments who need and want your products and/or services. This module teaches you how to get inside the head of your ideal customers and understand what motivates them in order to be effective at communications.

Module 3 Storytelling to Elevate Your Workforce/Education Brand
Storytelling is a strategy that unlocks empathy in our brains and helps your customers remember you. It builds a business case as to why you are the best organization to solve their challenges. This module walks you through how to build a brand narrative and tailored messaging that align with your ideal customer profile.

Module 4 Building Internal Brand Ambassadors to Support Outreach Efforts
Workforce and education organizations tend to work in silos when it comes to recruitment and outreach efforts which can contribute to market confusion, brand narrative inconsistencies, lost opportunities and wasted outreach dollars. This module helps your team understand their role at various customer touch points and how to leverage and coordinate each department/division efforts into a seamless lead generation machine that benefits the entire organization.

Intro to Marketing

Module 5 Integrated Marketing 101
Your potential customers are multidimensional so your marketing approaches should be too. Integrated marketing is a strategy that uses different forms of media, called channels, to tell a story or convey an idea. This module highlights various channels such as advertising, social media, eMarketing and public relations and helps participants identify the pros and cons of each based on their marketing objectives.

Module 6 The Wonderful World of Digital
Reaching customers online is what digital marketing is all about; it's the promotion of your brand to connect with potential customers using the internet and other forms of digital communication. This includes nurturing your online footprint through your website, search engine optimization and search engine marketing. It also entails proactive outreach through email marketing. Learn all of the elements of digital marketing in this module.

Module 7 Direct and Experiential Marketing
Direct marketing is a form of advertising that involves directly communicating a marketing message to a potential customer, usually through mail, email, telemarketing, or door-to-door visits. Experiential marketing, also called experiential brand marketing, grassroots marketing, engagement marketing, or live marketing, is a way for brands to connect with consumers through experiences. In an ever-crowded digital landscape, how can these two forms of marketing differentiate your brand? You'll learn when and how to implement these high-touch marketing strategies and some of our favorite resources.

PR and Planning

Module 8 The Best in Public Relations Strategies
Public relations (PR) is the strategy of managing how others see and feel about a person, brand, or company. This module highlights how to garner earned media placements. You will learn how to research and write media pitches, create a highly effective list, develop and distribute press releases and effective follow-up for placements.

Module 9 The Art of Podcasting
Your instructor knows a few things about this topic! She has over 30K monthly viewers and has earned over 750 5-star ratings on her podcast, "Your Brand Amplified". While podcasting is one of the most valuable marketing tools around, find out if you should start your own podcast or use other methods to elevate your brand through guest podcasting and how to do it right.

Module 10 Creating Your Strategic Marketing and Communications Plan
Now that you have all of the foundational tools and skills to understand the best way to market your organization, what is your plan? This module shows you a step-by-step method for identifying the right strategies, tactics, objectives and metrics to jumpstart your plan and keep your brand building efforts on track.



<https://www.fullcapacitymarketing.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/The-Brand-Amplifier-for-Workforce-and-Education-2026.pdf>



***Offered to current MACAE members.**



Statewide Adult Education Campaign



Project Phases	Description	Deliverables	High-Level Timeline
PHASE 1	Stakeholder Engagement	Planning and kickoff webinar & meetings to inform stakeholders about the project. Stakeholder surveys & applications for pilot project & scholarship opportunities distributed to stakeholders.	Late Summer – Early Fall 2026
	Research	Review survey results and applications & award pilot & scholarship participants. Finalize the market segmentation strategy using demographic and psychographic data; build profiles across the 10 prosperity regions to develop and test personas; use FCM's Meltwater platform to test keywords and phrases for each market segment.	Fall 2026
PHASE 2	Campaign Framework	Develop & test short-list of campaign names; creative assets for campaign including landing page & multilingual ads.	Winter 2026-2027
	Marketing Toolkit	Finalize toolkit with flyer templates, social media posts and graphics, press release templates, and media fact sheets (TBD based on survey results).	Spring 2027
	Capacity Building	Webinars: roll out with toolkit. Host and deploy the capacity-building webinar series modeled on the Illinois campaign to ensure providers can effectively raise awareness and utilize best practices for lead nurturing and conversion.	Spring 2027
PHASE 3	Pilot Rollout	Finalize recommended segmented media plan for digital platforms and launch toolkit and digital campaign with two of the prosperity regions (urban and rural). Test campaign creative; finalize toolkit based on results.	Summer 2027
	Full Launch	The targeted digital marketing campaign will scale statewide across all 10 prosperity regions as we track KPIs, optimize ads and provide any technical assistance to the regions about how to use the toolkit effectively to support the execution of the 15 to 30 intentional	Late Summer - Winter 2027
PHASE 4	Final Report & Debrief	Conduct a comprehensive data analysis (including the post-campaign Meltwater Jan - Feb 2028 Explore sentiment analysis), tracking resulting enrollments, and submitting the final report.	Winter 2027-2028

High-Level Timeline



Next Steps

Go to: <https://www.macae.org/campaign>

Marketing Certification Course - Ten Scholarships (Valued at \$1,295 each): Offered to current MACAE members or those who have been MACAE members in the last calendar year. Submit an application to be accepted into FCM's online course, The Brand Amplifier for Workforce & Education Professionals. Elevate your team members' marketing skills by earning this valuable certification. **Due 10/23/26 (MACAE Members Only).**

Stay informed through our eNewsletter: If you are not a MACAE member, [opt-in](#) to MACAE's Campaign eNewsletter to get the latest on this 18-month initiative. Tell your colleagues about the campaign and have them review the recorded kickoff webinar!

[Take the 3-Minute Survey:](#) Make your voice count in this three-minute survey to let us know what marketing tools you need to be successful in raising awareness and recruiting adult learners. We'll apply your feedback in the development of the Marketing Toolkit & Professional Development Webinars. Share the [survey link](#) with your colleagues! **Due 10/23/26.**



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