

**JANUARY 2025 UPDATE:** *The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation has awarded a two-year grant in support of the next phase of this work, which will be guided by the objectives, principles, and activities outlined in this document. A formal announcement with more information is forthcoming soon. Thank you to everyone who took the time to participate in webinars and contribute feedback. [Sign up](#) to receive updates.*

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## Proposal for National Coordination on Open Education

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### Background

Open education has grown from an inspiring idea to a burgeoning field of practitioners, innovators, and advocates around the world. In the United States, the open education field has made significant progress to benefit learners by expanding awareness and adoption of open educational resources (OER), supporting innovative open educational practices, and establishing state-level policies that support open education.

Yet, open education faces challenges as the landscape shifts in response to emerging technologies and a changing marketplace. While open education efforts have a meaningful impact for learners no matter their scope, to make progress toward broader goals—whether that be student success, cost savings, cultural responsiveness, or beyond—the field’s strategies must adapt.

In spring 2024, [DOERS](#), [SPARC](#) and the regional interstate higher education compacts ([MHEC](#), [NEBHE](#), [SREB](#) and [WICHE](#)) organized a series of conversations about what a national open education strategy in the United States might look like. These discussions found strong interest in greater national coordination to address common needs to advance open education work, such as funding, recognition, and advocacy. They also identified key principles, such as avoiding duplication and respecting the unique contexts of states and regions.

### What Comes Next

To support potential next steps on this work, the Hewlett Foundation invited DOERS, SPARC and the compacts to develop a grant proposal to fund a collaborative national coordination initiative. Over the fall 2024, we will organize a series of opportunities for members of the open education field to provide input on what this initiative might look like, what its priorities might be, and how it can be governed.

The purpose of this document is to provide a foundation by articulating what we heard from previous discussions, guiding questions for community input, and information on how to get involved. We have also established an interim [Steering Committee](#) to review the feedback and determine next steps.

## **Initial Framework**

We have drafted a guiding framework for national coordination based on the wide range of input gathered in spring 2024. This framework includes a vision, purpose statement, a set of strategic objectives to focus on, and a set of principles to guide the work.

### **Vision**

We work toward a vision where educational resources and practices in U.S. higher education (and beyond) are open by default and equitable by design. We believe that:

- Open powers sustainable content for everyone to teach and learn from
- Open enables more effective and responsive educational practices
- Open dismantles inequities built into legacy systems

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this initiative is to facilitate strategic coordination within the open education field in order to fill gaps and enable larger outcomes in service of learners.

### **Strategic Objectives**

1. Increase the visibility of open education in conversations and forums that reach decision-makers.
2. Expand access to funding opportunities for open education initiatives.
3. Build infrastructure to support sustainable open education work.
4. Enhance the recognition of open education as a scholarly practice and professional field.
5. Address key barriers that challenge open education work.

### **Guiding Principles**

1. Engage transparently and openly with the open education community, meaningfully integrating feedback and participation at all levels of work.

2. Operate at the national level while remaining aware of the diverse contexts of states and regions, including how activities and messages may impact states differently.
3. Collaborate with existing organizations and communities in the open education space, seeking to complement and uplift their work where welcome, while respecting their agency and individual missions.
4. Avoid duplication of existing efforts, focusing on activities that fill gaps and catalyze opportunities that benefit the field.
5. Center equitable and inclusive practices to avoid replicating harmful structures, while acknowledging the inequities in the systems we navigate.

### Potential Program Activities

- Develop (where necessary) and disseminate high-impact tools and resources, such as customizable fact sheets, talking points, event trackers, or opportunity boards.
- Advocate for open education in public and policy circles, including promoting positive media coverage and educating federal policymakers.
- Coordinate or support open education sessions at strategic conferences, such as those of major academic societies, professional organizations, and policymakers.
- Facilitate opportunities to apply for funding by researching potential grant programs and supporting professional development for grant writing and advocacy skills.
- Create professional recognition opportunities for open education work, such as promoting publication opportunities, U.S. national awards, or online profiles.

## What We Want Input About

During the upcoming conversations, we are seeking the community's input on the development of the initiative. This includes the potential programmatic activities and broader questions about how the initiative can be best designed to serve the needs of the open education field.

### Questions for Feedback

- **Framework:** Do the purpose, objectives and guiding principles resonate with you? Is there anything missing?
- **Activities:** Which activities would help your open education work? Which wouldn't help? What is missing?
- **Communication:** What forms of communication work best for you? How would you like to give feedback, and how would you like to receive information?
- **Constituency:** How should the initiative define the constituency it serves? Does it need to have its own membership, or is it possible to serve the whole community?
- **Governance:** What are some principles for governance of the initiative to ensure that it remains aligned with the field's needs?

- **Code of Conduct:** What community norms would you want to see reflected in an initiative like this?

## How to Get Involved

We invite all who consider themselves part of the open education field to provide input and participate in shaping the direction of this work.

### Participate in a Webinar

We are hosting a set of webinars that are open to all who are interested in participating. These conversations will explore the questions set forth above.

Community Conversation: National Coordination on Open Education (Choose One)

- Option 1: Tuesday, September 24th ([Padlet from Webinar 1](#))
- Option 2: Wednesday, October 2nd ([Padlet from Webinar 2](#))
- Option 3: Thursday, October 17th ([Padlet from Webinar 3](#))

Report Out: National Coordination on Open Education, Tuesday, October 29th

- [Recording of Report Out Webinar](#)
- [Padlet from Report Out Webinar](#)

### [Submit Comments](#)

If you are unable to join a webinar, we welcome your written comments. [This Padlet](#) includes space for key questions and may be submitted anonymously.

### [Sign Up to Participate](#)

If you are interested in receiving updates or getting involved in potential national coordination projects, [please complete the form.](#)

## Interim Steering Committee

*July - December, 2024*

To guide the development of the grant proposal and process of gathering community input, DOERS, SPARC and the regional compacts have established a steering committee. The committee comprises one representative each for DOERS, SPARC, and each of the four regional compacts and six members selected by unanimous consensus from our communities. If

the grant proposal is approved, the committee will be responsible for appointing a successor committee to oversee the grant-funded work.

1. Nicole Allen, Director of Open Education, SPARC
2. Bob Awkward, Assistant Commissioner for Academic Effectiveness, Massachusetts Department of Higher Education
3. Dr. Tonja Conerly, OER Sociology Professor, San Jacinto College
4. Liliana Diaz, Senior Policy Analyst, Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education
5. Abbey K. Elder, Open Access & Scholarly Communication Librarian, Iowa State University
6. Kathy Essmiller, Associate Professor, Coordinator OpenOKState, Oklahoma State University
7. David Garcia, Program Specialist, Southern Regional Education Board
8. Regina Gong, Associate Dean for Student Success and Diversity, University of San Diego Copley Library
9. Brad Griffith, Associate Vice Chancellor of Innovation, Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education
10. Amy Hofer, Statewide Open Education Program Director, Open Oregon Educational Resources
11. Jenny Parks, VP of Policy and Research, Midwestern Higher Education Compact
12. Laura Robert-Rivera, Senior Project Manager, New England Board of Higher Education